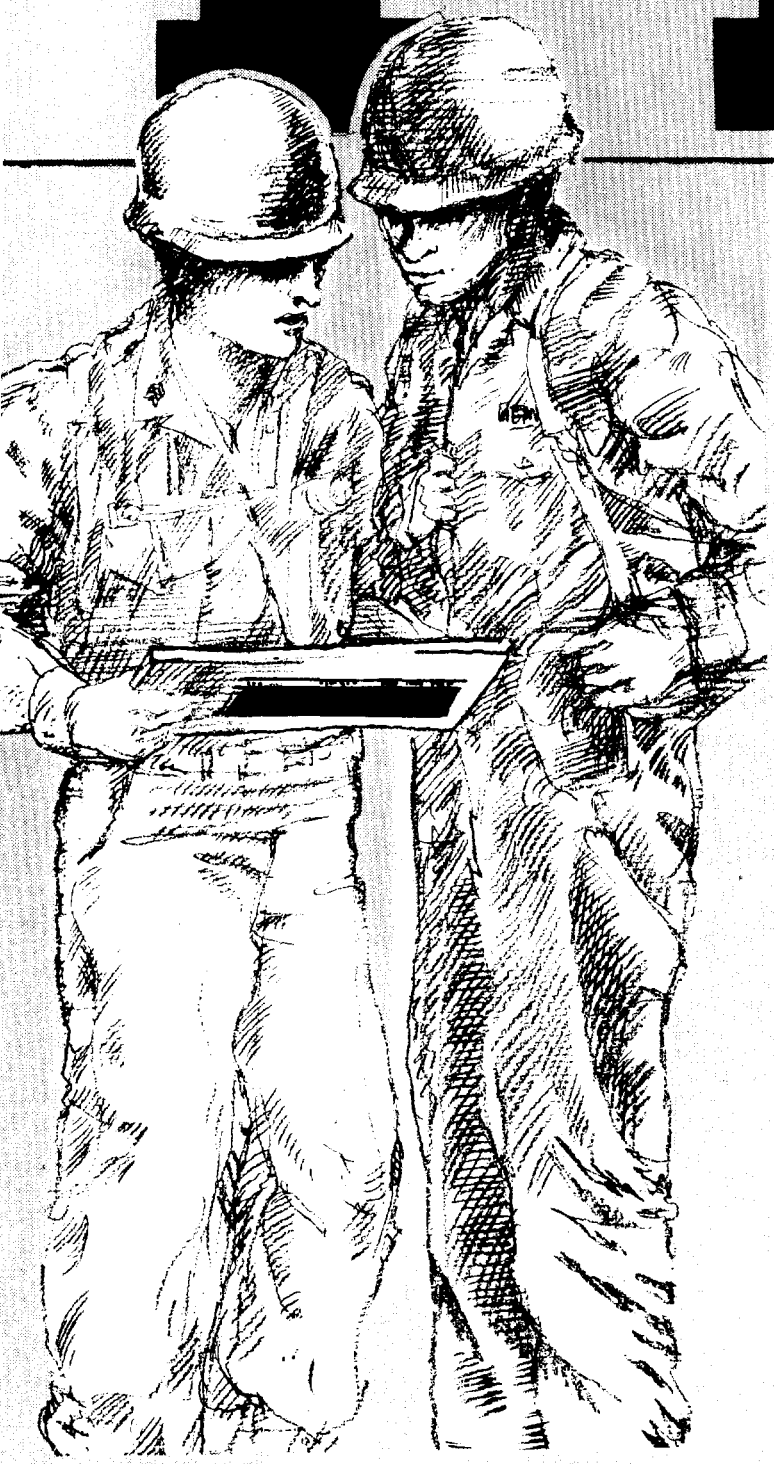
PROGRESSIVE LABOR MAGAZINE

PL

Summer-Fall 1981
Vol. 14, No. 2
75¢



SOLDIERS AND SAILORS –

A Key Force For Revolution

ALSO:

Who Rules Britain?
Marx and Racism
Auto Workers and Communism – Pt II
Book Reviews
and more . . .

Subscribe!

KKK Rally Smashed in Conn.

– INSIDE –

Postal Contract	4
NYC Transit	4
Los Angeles	5
Cook County Hospital	4
NEA Convention	5
International	7
Letters	8

PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY 10¢

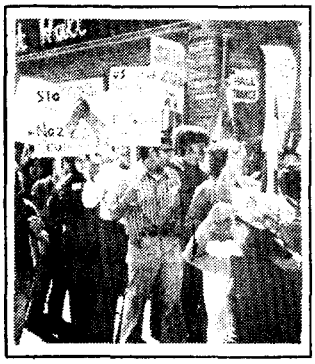
Rebellion in Britain — U.S. Next?

...bellion)

Every week, *Challenge-Desafío* brings you news of workers in struggle for socialism and against racism on the job, in the schools and neighborhoods, here and around the world. Challenge-Desafío strives to present the unconditional truth of class struggle, so our class can learn from experience how to win.

PL★

Summer-Fall 1981 *Vol. 14, No. 2*
PL-PROGRESSIVE LABOR MAGAZINE
Published by the Progressive Labor Party
GPO Box 808 *Brooklyn, NY 11202*



Notes and Comment 2

Soldiers and Sailors: A Key Force For Revolution 8
The armed forces are both the main instrument used by the bosses to hold power and maintain their system, and a very vulnerable Achilles' heel. Our party is organizing inside the armed forces to turn the bosses' plans for World War III into their death warrant at the hands of the working class.

Who Rules Britain? 24
This article, published in Britain as a Progressive Labour Movement pamphlet, shows how the bosses and the bankers rule behind the facade of British democracy, and calls for socialist revolution.

Rebellion in Britain – Is U.S. Next? 40
This analysis, reprinted from a ***Challenge*** editorial, shows the potential for rebellion in the U.S. is high as ruling class attacks on workers' lives continue.

Auto Workers and Communism: The Crucial Years, 1933-37 42
This article, the second in a series, traces the growth of the U.A.W. and the history of the Communist Party USA within it during the wave of organizing and strikes that culminated in the great Flint sit-downs.

Marx: Fighter Against Racism 50
Ruling-class academics, having failed to make Marx and Marxism go away by calling it outmoded, are now trying to slander Marx as a racist. This article exposes their lies, and shows how important Marx considered the fight against racism to be.

Book Reviews 56
Reviews of three books on slavery and U.S. history, on the labor movement and on religion and revolution.

The articles appearing in PL Magazine are published because the Editorial Board believes they are generally useful in the ideological development of the international revolutionary communist movement. Only the editorial and PLP National Committee documents represent the official policies of the Party.

notes and comment

We welcome letters and comments from our readers on articles in the magazine and on related topics. Please address all letters and articles to:

PL-PROGRESSIVE LABOR MAGAZINE
GPO BOX 808
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11202

What Causes Social Change?
Two Comments and an Author's Reply

'Road to Revolution III Said it Better'

I believe it was an error to publish the article "What Causes Social Change?" even in its revised version. The new version eliminates some errors of the earlier draft, but retains others. However, the main problem with publishing this article is this: in **Road to Revolution III (PL Magazine,** Volume 8, number 3) our party attempted to summarize and extend the criticisms of the theory of productive forces (TPF) put forward by the left in the cultural revolution. The articles in RR III attempt to place our analysis in the context of the history of the development of communist theory. I believe that these efforts were successful.

The present article is inferior in every way to what we have already published. It is less clear, and it is, I believe, less accurate. While the articles in RR III, particularly the third one (pp. 50-71), clearly state where our line differs from that of earlier communists, the present article is confusing. Its persistent attack on **any** role for the development of technology in historical change seems to be an attack on the materialist science of history.

When RR III was reprinted, the third article was not, I assume for reasons of economy. This article remains a clear and thorough statement of the party's line on many of the questions dealt with here. I propose that we simply **reprint** that article from RR III for the **PL** issue on soviet imperialism. An article written as an attack on an academic presentation of a mechanical distortion of Marxism cannot be the one we need, no matter how many revisions it may undergo. If the International Committee does not feel that the old article is adequate, then we could write a **new piece**, criticizing it and developing our line further. This old article, which includes an excellent review of the development of the Bolshevik lines on the peasantry, the national question, world revolution, and the "two-state" theory of revolution, might also serve as an article on the ideological role of revisionism in the Soviet Union.

Some comments on the details of the present version:

- p. 21-The theory of productive forces is defined: social change is caused by the advance of technology. Compare this with the skilled discussion of the determinist versus the political tendencies within Marxism on p. 52 of RR III. Lenin and Stalin, who certainly had determinist weaknesses in their thinking, would **never** subscribe to the oversimplified, mechanical theory labelled here as the theory of productive forces.

- p. 22-In RR III our criticism of classical Marxism's view on the peasantry and "third world" countries was not that capitalist development is not necessary for the development of socialism. We said that capitalist social relations prevail world wide. Comments on p. 10 could be understood as saying that development of capitalism is not necessary for socialism revolution.

- p. 24-The presentation of "What communists recognize" is idealist. It treats these factors as part of "human nature" rather than as the outcome of how we must live in order to survive.

- More important, this page is implicitly racist. The fact is that capitalism murders millions all over the world by depriving workers of the material necessities of life. It will get worse in WW III. We fight for socialism in order to **survive** and create a world in which our descendents can live. The creation of more satisfying relations among us is an important but secondary reason why we fight for socialism. It seems primary only to middle class people who do not yet u[illegible] that **capitalism means** [illegible]**em.**

- p. 24-"Chi[illegible] until the early 70s [illegible] not the party's line. RR III says that the bosses regained state power in the late 1950s in response to the leftward surge of the Great Leap Forward.

- "Material standard of living higher in the U.S. than in China." This is not so obvious, though perhaps true. What about elimination of malnutrition, death from freezing and heat, rural health care, police murder, unemployment, infestation by rats, etc. Any of these might be material standards that were better in socialist China than in the capitalist U.S. Others might think of more.

- p. 26-"So Marx's analysis of the rise of capitalism does not rest on the role of technology." This is unproven. Didn't the rise of capitalism presuppose an increase in agricultural productivity that made it possible to support an urban working class?

- p. 26-What are the material prerequisites for socialism? The

author says "capitalist social relations." This is consistent with RR III. But what has given rise to capitalist social relations? The author does not say!! Marx offered a theory to answer this question. At a certain point in history only the replacement of feudalism by capitalism could unfetter the potential to expand to new markets inherent in the productive forces at that time: "The feudal relations of property... became no longer compatible with the already developed productive forces; they became so many fetters. They had to be burst asunder; they were burst asunder." This is Marxism!

The class struggle is the battlefield in which historical change is made. But the struggle of classes takes place in the context of a certain development of productive forces (as well as having a powerful impact on the development of productive forces). The development of productive forces makes the victory of one class over another inevitable.

Just as, in an earlier period, there was a contradiction between the productive forces existing under feudalism and feudal property relations, so in the current period there is a contradiction between capitalist production relations and modern forces of production. In Marx's time this contradiction manifested itself in periodic depressions, high unemployment, and rotting factories as workers starved. In our time we add to these manifestations of the contradiction between capitalism and modern forces of production fascism and world war. In these horrors the bosses actively **destroy** the modern forces of production because they can no longer be used to make a profit. This massive destruction of the means of producing the necessities of life and the mass murder of the workers of the world make it necessary and inevitable for us to destroy this murdering system.

This theory need not lead to deterministic distortions which downplay the importance of revolutionary ideology, organization, and the struggle against revisionism. It need not lead to the unfounded belief that the development of socialism toward communism depends on the development of more efficient productive forces. This theory that the development of productive forces sets limits to the class struggle, determining which classes fight for control of society in any given era, is the theory of Marxism, is the theory of RR III, and is the line of the party until that line is rediscussed and rejected.

(In the introductory comments, the above "classically Marxist" views are contrasted with the view that class struggle has always been more a determinant of the productive forces than vice versa. But there is **no contradiction between the two contrasted views.** The development of the productive forces sets limits to the class struggle. The class struggle sets limits to the development of the productive forces. Both are true!! Certainly without the overthrow of feudalism modern industry never would have developed. Without the overthrow of socialist capitalism production cannot develop. The interaction of class struggle with the development of the production is part of classical Marxist theory. It is certainly consistent with Marxism that the limitations on the development of production imposed by class struggle are more important than the limitations on the class struggle imposed by the development of production. In any case, it is clear to me that they limit each other.)

Historical Materialism and Change

Knowledge of the laws of development of society will enable the party and the working class to effectively struggle against capitalism. In the very guts of capitalism, in its fundamental economic structure, you find the contradiction that propels capitalism to its doom. It is the social character of production (productive forces) in unity and struggle with the private character of appropriation (production relations) that ultimately determines capitalism's path. This contradiction causes economic crises, poverty, unemployment, the **class struggle** between boss and workers, and will be the ultimate cause of revolution.

This understanding, in the hands of the party, is of immense importance in explaining society, developing a strategy for struggle and in creating a class-conscious proletariat, capable of destroying capitalism and building socialism. Capitalism is doomed! Socialist revolution will topple this decrepit imperialist system. This arms us with good news for the working class. It will help build PLP if used properly.

However, the fact that some revisionists say that we can sit around and wait for the funeral, does not mean we can chuck historical materialism out the door. No, as Stalin once said, "You know that a theory, when it is a genuine theory, gives practical workers the power of orientation, clarity of perspective, faith in their work, confidence in the victory of our cause." We must be the pallbearers of capitalism.

From this point of view, the article on Marx's theory of change (**PL Magazine** Spring 1981) and its earlier draft are distressing. There is backward motion. The first draft, which appeared in an internal bulletin, made a confusing, though generally successful attempt at defending historical materialism. It was too academic and offered too little of a revolutionary outlook. The second, **What Causes Social Change** (WCC) cleans up the language prob-

PL★ PROGRESSIVE LABOR MAGAZINE

Summer 1981 Vol. 14, No. 2

ISSN 0033-0795
Published Quarterly by
Progressive Labor Party
220 East 23rd Street
New York, N.Y. 10010

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
Individuals $3.50/year
Library/Institution . .$10/year
Foreign Rates on Request

Application to Mail at 2nd-Class Rates is Pending at New York, NY

Postmaster: Please send address change notices to above address.

comment and notes

Historical Materialism

(continued from page 3)

lems, throws out the facts and content, and substitutes rhetoric for argument. In place of historical materialism, we get idealism and pragmatism—we do what has to be done and don't worry if there are any general laws of social development. In other words, the sum of the article is a denial of any general economic laws in society.

What is the main thing WCC is trying to say? "... that **people, classes, struggle** and **politics** are primary. Technological development, as a motive power in human history, is secondary." Put that way, it seems anti-people to disagree. But what we want to know is, what is history, what causes social change? History is the history of class struggle. Class struggle is due to the existence of "large groups of people which differ from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated by law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labor, and, consequently, by the dimensions and mode of acquiring the share of social wealth of which they dispose. Classes are groups of people, one of which can appropriate the labor of another owing to the different places they occupy in a definite system of social economy." (Lenin–**A Great Beginning**)

Now Marx called class struggle "the battles of developing production." (Letter to Weydemeyer, March 5, 1852.) You cannot understand social change without seeing its dialectical nature. It is the unity and struggle of the productive forces and production relations that is at the base of most social change. This occurs through class struggle, not instead of or in spite of it. WCC is mixing apples and onions by productive forces and class struggle in the same dimension. It is just confusing things.

"The chaos and arbitrariness that had previously reigned in views of history and politics were replaced by a strikingly integral and harmonious theory, which shows how, in consequence of the growth of productive forces, out of one system of social life another and higher system develops —how capitalism, for instance, grows out of feudalism." (Lenin—**Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism**) Now Lenin was one of those guys that saw the need for class struggle and this statement does not negate that. Rather he is pointing to general laws which operate **independent of the wills** of men and women. You can't go out and do whatever you deem necessary. But if you understand the epoch and act in accordance with the laws of development, you will play a significant role in history. This is why the bourgeoisie cannot stem the tide of revolution, why the working class will win.

Marx said, '... At a certain stage of their development, the material forces of production of society come into conflict with the existing production relations .... From forms of development of productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution...." (K. Marx—**Preface to a Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy**)

The first draft says that the above statement is at the crux of our dispute with Cohen. The second, WCC, does not mention it. Before going on, this brings up a glaring weakness in WCC. It is not a serious critique of somebody who, according to the draft, has written the most influential book on Marx in English and North American universities. WCC does not have a single quote from Cohen, oversimplifies his analysis to the point of being ludicrous. For example, the draft article states that Cohen says revolution may play a significant role at times, while WCC implies he never mentions it.

If Cohen's book is important, we will not gain any credence or support by primarily villifying it and outshouting anybody who disagrees with us. This is not a serious revolutionary approach. For those of us who become impatient with long-winded critiques like the draft (I did not read it until I started this critique of WCC), well, we probably won't read Cohen's book on **Capital** either. But for those willing to wade through, we should save what is useful in the draft and start from there. Maybe set up a Crush Cohen Collective (CCC) and lay the guy to rest theoretically. One of the first Russian Marxists, Plekhanov wrote **The Materialist Conception of History**, which destroyed the economic determinists of his day. Other excellent works include Engels, **Ludwig Feuerbach, Socialism, Utopian** and **Scientific**, Marx, **The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte** and R. Palme Dutt **Fascism and Social Revolution**. But these other books are not specific polemics with revisionists as Plekhanov's pamphlet is.

Back to the dialectical nature of social change. Society has an economic basis and a superstructure of culture, ideas, institutions and organizations that rest on that base. So, for example, you have laws and government power (like police) guaranteeing the capitalists' right to own factories and to hire and fire workers. Socialism would have a law prohibiting the same. We say that the economic base determines the superstructure. At the same time the superstructure affects the base as development occurs.

The economic base is the base because it is the production and reproduction of real life that comes first. "In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensible and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political, and intellectual life process in general." (Marx, Preface to **Critique of Political Economy**) One comment on quoting these guys: the main thing is that they said the stuff very well, not that they are the authority or the last word.

There is continual change going on with continuing production. There is a dialectical unity between productive forces and production relations.

notes and comment

At any given moment one or the other can be primary. Capitalist revolution enabled mankind to make great technological progress and for a period of time the developing productive forces were the dominant aspect of the contradiction. But at least from the time of the first general economic crisis of capitalism in 1825, the production relations of capitalism have become a fetter on the development of production. This is one of the things Marx proved in **Capital.** This does not mean development ceased. After each crisis, it leaped forward again. These crises are capitalism's way of righting itself, or eliminating relative overproduction, regenerating capital and getting rid of inefficient capitalist enterprises. One of our main problems is that the working class bears the brunt of the economic crisis. It is we who are thrown out of work. We go hungry. We starve to death or are sent to the trenches to help the capitalists "right" themselves. But just as we create the surplus value that makes their profits, so we run production. It is our labor power that produces all existing social wealth. We do not need a single stock broker. banker, advertising exec, or government official to continue creating this wealth. In fact, they are in the way. And their masters, the capitalist class, are in the way. They must be blown out of the way.

At the time of each economic crisis the ruling class loses some control of the society. The last major depression, in the 1930's, led to fascism and war, and in some countries, revolution. It was the incorrect analysis of the Comintern that enabled capitalism to survive as well as it did. Instead of seizing the initiative for socialist revolution, communists fought to preserve democracy. In spite of this, revolution triumphed in China and Albania and socialism advanced for a time.

Since World War Two, there have been six recessions of a milder nature than the Great Depression. Today, there are eight million people unemployed, another five (?) on welfare and the ruling class seems intent on saving itself through war. With it they will bring destruction that will make the Nazis of Hitler look like rock throwers. We will have fascism and anarchy. But they will be out of control. A class-conscious proletariat led by a revolutionary communist party will have the chance to destroy capitalism. We will win because we are prepared and because we will be acting in accordance with the sweep of history. All who stand in the way will be blown away. Time waits for no one. (If we are not ready? Read up on what happens to losers.)

WCC is also filled with inaccuracies and unsubstantiated remarks.

Page 20 says the USSR was never socialist. Without belaboring the point, this would mean there was little to learn from the Russian revolution and such is not the case.

Page 21 explains productive forces theory so simplistically that it can't even stand up to turning the page. Just a straw man, nothing like the position TD says Cohen presents. Also diagram ain't bad.

Page 21 Cohen includes people as labor power in productive forces. At top of page we neglect to say this.

Page 22 It should be noted that Lenin developed this two-stage theory of revolution and that the Russian Revolution went through two stages. Lenin says the February Revolution was a bourgeois-democratic one and the October Revolution was a socialist revolution.

Page 23 "Nothing about capitalist society can be understood unless we begin from this fundamental point, the existence of classes and the struggle among classes." Author is referring to workers and bosses. But what is more basic is why these classes exist and why there is class struggle that will lead to socialism.

Page 24 Somebody save us! How do you measure happiness and creativity? This whole attack on material wealth is idealist garbage. Forget the toothpaste bull. Socialism will solve: Energy crisis; Housing shortages; Hunger; Steel, coal, oil, auto, appliances, clothing, etc. production. If Socialism cannot do a turnabout and give people the things they need to insure health and life, forget happiness and creativity. The author is attacking capitalism. But the Russian Revolution overcame a world war, intervention, a civil war, famine and revisionists to build a blossoming economy (in the 1930's) while the capitalist world was falling apart. Socialism provides more material goods for the working class than capitalism ever will.

Page 24 "Under socialism, we as a collective will make the decisions that influence our lives—we won't be under the thumb of some rich asshole (such language!). That's what we mean when we say that socialism will eliminate exploitation." Shades of SDS! Exploitation is the extraction of surplus value by the bourgeoisie. When we eliminate it that means they are not going to pocket our wealth any more. Article is too sloppy. This is worst part.

Page 25 "Marx was not perfect, and he did occasionally err on the side of technological determinism." When? What is the sense of a statement like that? Engels says that he and Marx had to spend more time on economic stuff than they would have liked to because of all the erroneous views around. But that is not the same as saying they occasionally erred on the side of technological determinism. Is it?

Page 25 The picture (WCC talks about) Marx paints of the development of capitalism from feudalism in England is indeed not a picture of developing technology. But it is based on the "continental demand for wool." That is the economic basis of the class struggle he describes. It led to the Highland Clearances, the brutal slaughter of Scottish clans by their own leaders and the British army. The increasing demand for wool was based on what? I think it was textile mills employing new technology. The dialectic here should not be missed. It goes back and forth which WCC is actually showing, if the author would open his/her eyes.

Page 26 "It is idle speculation to ask if socialism could have arisen on the basis of some society other than capitalism." (because capitalism exists everywhere now) We should not say that. If only for "shedding light on the methods of historical materialist analysis . . ." Some of us could use a whole lot of light which is of immediate "political practicality."

Page 27 WCC returns to production of material goods and again seems to think we will just have plenty and our main problems will be with conspicuous consumption and bad habits. We will improve the standard of living of the working class or else socialism will not survive. And that does not mean cars with five wheels instead of four, or an electric toothbrush in every bathroom cabinet. It means good housing, diet, recreation, cloth-

comment and notes

ing, work for all.

Page 27 The material prerequisites for socialism have existed since at least 1825 when the first capitalist crisis occurred. The first workers' rebellion occurred in 1831 in Lyons, France. In 1838, the Chartist movement was the first national working class group. These were a reflection of existing material prerequisites.

We must become the most influential theoretical force on Marxism-Leninism. This is the theory of revolution that explains the past and the present so that we can seize the future. While bourgeois theoretics must squirm and hide from the truth, we take every event and fact straight up. We have nothing to lose. Each fact, congealed into theory and strategy, is another ray of sunshine on capitalism's grave.

Comradely, A. M.

A Reply from the Authors

Both AM and PG see "developing production" as the motor force of history. They argue that the connection between forces of production and relations of production is important because it is this connection which explains what holds back and what develops production – which is a way of saying that the development of production is the key event in history. This outlook of AM and PG is thoroughly capitalist: it implies that the most important question about a society is the level of material goods available, not the class relations. Both AM and PG get very upset at the correct communist persective put forward by *What Causes Social Change?* – that our goal is primarily to eliminate exploitation, not to increase the amount of material goods available to people. Neither one notices that the most important aspect of production is **not** the goods made **nor** the tools used, but the relations among people which are reproduced through production. When we work for a capitalist in a factory, we produce much more than cars, steel or whatever: we also reproduce the social relations by which the capitalist owns the products and we are left with nothing (after buying the food, etc., that we need), forcing us to go back to the factory once again. All the material wealth of the capitalists means nothing unless they can keep on forcing us to work for them.

AM and PG are also upset that *What Causes Social Change* states that Marx occasionally erred on the side of technological determinism. We are not followers of a religion of Marxism who quote from the holy works to make a point. The authors of *What Causes Social Change* were asked**not** to use quotes from the classics, but to show that their essential idea makes sense in today's context and in more everyday language. An example of a simple-minded "theory of productive forces" quote from Marx is, "The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist." (***The Poverty of Philosophy*** in Collected Works, Vol. 6, p. 166). Stalin's account in ***Dialectical and Historical Materialism*** is also heavily marred by this perspective. He says, "First the productive forces of society change and then, depending on these changes and in conformity with them, men's relations of production, their economic relations, change."

On some of the specific comments of AM and PG:

· The concept of two-stage revolution is an old revisionist idea pre-dating Lenin. Fortunately, Lenin's practice was to the left of his theory on this issue. He modified the old two-stage theory but never completely broke with it.

· China was under a dictatorship of the proletariat until the defeat of the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960s. This is and has been for ten years the line of PLP.

· The theory that the working class under socialism will receive all wealth in wages is wrong – much wealth will be used for socially-determined purposes. The superiority of socialism over capitalism does not lie mainly in the fact that under socialism there will be more wealth (because there will be no bourgeoisie to steal part of it), but in the fact that we will eliminate exploitation. The end of exploitation requires the elimination of the bourgeoisie. AM evidently objects to explanation of this theory in any words other than Marx's own.

· Relations of production and forces of production are certainly inter-related. It is a gross misuse of dialectics, however, to pretend that because they are inter-related, they are therefore of equal importance. In most relationships there is a primary aspect; others are secondary. AM and PG disagree with *What Causes Social Change?* over which aspect is primary.

The survival of socialist societies does not depend primarily on the production of more goods, but on successful class struggle, especially in the political sphere. The defeat of socialism in the USSR was not caused by the backward level of production, but by errors in the Bolsheviks' line and by the opposition of capitalists inside and outside the USSR.

From the Editors

Due to accumulated production delays, this issue is being published as a double issue. The next issue, Vol. 14, No. 3,(Winter 1981-82) will appear in November. All subscriptions will be extended by one issue.

notes and comment

OOOPS!

A portion of a paragraph was omitted from the *State Capitalism* article in the Spring 1981 *PL Magazine* (Vol. 14, No. 1). The full text, from page 19 of the magazine, is reprinted below.

Like imperialism, with which it seems inextricably linked, state capitalism is undoubtedly a "higher" stage of capitalism. But because it expropriates individual and corporate owners, because it centralizes production in the state, because it increases production by leaps and bounds, it does not in any way become socialism, or even move us any closer to socialism. State capitalism is not socialism. From its beginnings capitalism—be it competitive, monopoly or "state monopoly" capitalism—has presented the material prerequisites for socialism, namely, a working class facing a capitalist class. From the time of the development of scientific socialism and the Leninist revolutionary party, the working class has armed itself with the political prerequisites for socialism. But the transition to socialism is a class struggle against the capitalist class, not a development of capitalism under its own laws of motion. For instance, more advanced capitalism creates larger units of capital, which throw together thousands of workers in one workplace, or unite millions of workers internationally under the same boss (the multinationals), and so make it easier to organize, easier to see the need for socialism. State capitalism, so long as revolutionaries do not confuse it with socialism, exposes the class character of the state, making revolution more obviously the solution for workers. But more advanced capitalism creates greater means of repression—the very reason for the shift to **state** capitalism—making revolution harder. The period of state capitalism we are entering promises to be the bloodiest in the history of capitalism, and while it does open the door to world-wide revolution, it will also give rise to widespread reactionary ideologies of all sorts.

To Contact PLP

NATIONAL OFFICE:
PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY
220 East 23rd Street
New York, N.Y. 10010
212 • 685-3650

ARKANSAS:
Little Rock: Box 1562
Little Rock, Ark. 77203

CALIFORNIA:
Los Angeles:
706 S. Valencia
213 • 413-4199
Sacramento: P.O. Box 5523
Sacramento, Cal. 95817
San Diego: P.O. Box 14103
San Diego, Cal. 92114
San Francisco: P.O. Box 562
San Francisco, Cal. 94101

COLORADO:
Denver: 2239 E. Colfax
Denver, Colo. 80206

CONNECTICUT:
Storrs: P.O. Box 149
Storrs, Conn. 06268

ILLINOIS:
Chicago: P.O. Box 7814
Chicago, Ill. 60680
312 • 663-4138

INDIANA:
Gary: P.O. Box 2052
Gary, Ind. 46409

KANSAS:
Wichita: P.O. 3082
Wichita, Kan. 67201

MARYLAND:
Baltimore: P.O. Box 13426
Baltimore, Md. 21203

MASSACHUSETTS:
Boston: P.O. Box 512
Boston, Mass. 02216
Worcester: Box 185, West Side
Worcester, Mass.

MINNESOTA:
Minneapolis: P.O. Box 8255
Minneapolis, Minn. 55408

MICHIGAN:
Detroit: P.O. Box 32705
Detroit, Mich. 48232

MISSISSIPPI:
Tupelo: P.O. Box 1022
Tupelo, Miss. 38801

MISSOURI:
Kansas City: P.O. Box 23021
Kansas City, Mo. 64141
St. Louis: P.O. Box 2915
St. Louis, Mo. 63130

NEW JERSEY:
Newark: P.O. Box 6165
Newark, N.J. 07106

Great Britain
Progressive Labour Movement
c/o The Other Branch, Box 12
12 Gloucester St.
Leamington Spa, Warks

NEW YORK:
New York: P.O. Box 808
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11202
Buffalo: P.O. Box 93
Buffalo, N.Y. 14215

NORTH CAROLINA:
Durham: P.O. Box 3172
Durham, N.C. 27705

OHIO:
Columbus: P.O. Box 02074
Columbus, Ohio 43202

PENNSYLVANIA:
Bethlehem: P.O. Box 5358
Bethlehem, Pa. 18015
Philadelphia: P.O. Box 1374
Philadelphia, Pa. 19105
Pittsburgh: P.O. Box 4750
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15206

TEXAS:
Houston: P.O. Box 8510
Houston, Tex. 77009

WASHINGTON:
Seattle: P.O. Box 24472
Seattle, Wash. 98124

WASHINGTON, D.C.:
P.O. Box 3081
Washington, D.C. 20010

WEST VIRGINIA:
Wheeling: P.O. Box 1234
Wheeling, W. Va. 26003

WISCONSIN
Madison: P.O. Box 3001
Madison, Wisc. 53704

For more information about the *Progressive Labor Party*, or to discuss PL's ideas with PL members, write to addresses above.

This is the first of two articles drawn from the new military pamphlet to be published shortly by PLP. The second article, detailing the experiences of the Bolsheviks and of the Vietnam era, will appear in the Fall issue.

Soldiers and Sailors: A Key Force for Revolution

After returning from the Persian Gulf, two hundred Latin, Filipino and some white sailors met who were outraged at Ku Klux Klan activity aboard the USS Coral Sea...

– ***Challenge-Desafío,*** Nov. 12, 1980

"Attention!" In the moments that followed this shout, one hundred and fifty soldiers stationed at Ft. Eustis, Va. heard a PLPer and fifteen friends attack Klan graffiti on the bathroom walls. We said racism hurt black and white. "Kill the Klan," shouted the soldiers. Under the leadership of the Progressive Labor Party, GIs had been meeting for months to discuss building an anti-racist, anti-imperialist war movement inside the military. Five of us confronted the sergeant. The graffiti was removed.

– *From* ***Challenge-Desafío,*** Feb. 4 and April 1, 1981

Were these freak incidents or forebodings of mass GI rebellion? Frankly, it can go either way. GIs will undoubtedly rebel, here and there; in small and larger numbers, against racism and the drive towards war and fascism. But only a centrally-organized – indeed, a revolutionary – movement will be effective. GIs and their working-class allies must choose between gas chambers and atom bombs, or making socialist revolution. Many of our fellow-workers are already making their choice. As one party organizer put it: "When I first joined up, I didn't think I could convince GIs of the need to turn the guns around for workers' power. How wrong I was!"

Week after week, the letters GIs write to ***Challenge*** show the openness of soldiers and sailors to revolutionary and anti-racist ideas. A few of these letters are reprinted with this article. Members of our party who have joined the armed forces have indeed found a fertile ground for building a revolutionary movement. This article, and the pamphlet from which it is taken, discuss why this is and why we must build that movement, especially in these times, as world war comes closer every day.

THE SHIFTING BALANCE OF WORLD POWER

The brass, the bosses and their capitalist system in its modern form, imperialism, are preparing for world war. The two superpowers, the USSR and the United States, daily throw jabs at each other, as if they were prize fighters testing an opponent. Since Vietnam, their proxy wars have been fought on every continent.

The U.S. is the aging champion in this imperialist bloodbath. The USSR is the up-and-coming challenger, striking one telling blow after another. The Southeast Asian nations of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea (Cambodia), once vassals of U.S. imperialism, are now pro-Soviet. SEATO, the Asian equivalent of NATO, is in shambles. Africa is no longer the haven of western colonialism. Emerging nations are asserting their independence; some are openly pro-Soviet, as Angola, Libya and Ethiopia. Russia is also back in the Middle East, the oil lifeline of the western economies. Syria, Libya and South Yemen have signed friendship treaties (war alliances, in reality) with the Soviets. Iran is no longer protecting U.S. imperialism in the Persian Gulf. According to the ***Wall Street Journal*** (June 3, '81), even Saudi Foreign Minister Saud "recognizes the Soviet Union and acknowledges its super-power status." To be sure, there are ups and downs in this process. Egypt was once a Russian ally. It is now in the U.S. camp – at least as long as Sadat's shaky regime survives. The trend, however, is clear. The overthrow of the U.S. puppet Somoza in Nicaragua and the Civil War in El Salvador have led to the resurrection ofthe domino theory. Today, however, the State Department is referring to the fall of Central America, not Indochina!

Once-firm allies ofthe U.S. are having second thoughts. Europe is telling the U.S. to cool down its anti-Soviet campaign. Over a million in West Germany have signed a petition condemning the stationing of U.S. "cruise" missiles there. Even the British government, which may support the U.S. in words, proposes to cut its navy by 80%, sinking NATO's sea strategy. Japan has just cancelled joint naval maneuvers and will no longer allow U.S. ships carrying nuclear weapons to dock in her ports. The western allies are running like rats from a sinking ship.

As any boxing fan knows, the aging champion can't afford to play footsie too long. The vibrant challenger gets relatively stronger as the fight drags on. Likewise, the pressure for world war mounts on the U.S. bosses. They are desperate to save their imperialist crown, but have been battered severely in the early rounds. After Vietnam, most workers and youth have no intention of sacrificing their livelihood and lives on the altar of U.S. imperialism. The U.S. ruling class is on the ropes; that's why they are turning to fascism.

Fascism is the unleashed dictatorship of the bosses. Hiding behind racism, nationalism and anti-communism, fascism strikes out brutally to eliminate any opposition to the ruling class. Fascism meant the murder of six million Jews under Nazi Germany. Eighty million workers died, worldwide, before Hitler was placed in his grave. Fascism means the systematic genocide of the Indian population of Brazil, the death before age 5 of one out of every two black infants born in South Africa, and it means 17,000 massacred in El Salvador during the past two years. The misery of fascism, in its entirety, is indescribable.

Already the carnage is mounting in the U.S. as the bosses build fascism here. How many families have been destroyed by unemployment? How many are the deaths due to racist medical care cuts? How many have been murdered by racist cops? Some numbers come to mind: five black men butchered in Buffalo; 28 black children brutally murdered in Atlanta. Millions of dollars of free publicity have been given to the Ku Klux Klan and the Nazis by the bosses' media. Thousands of militant workers, led by PLP and InCAR, would have made short work of these few scum, were it not for the thousands of bosses' cops who protect them.

Reagan's program "seems to have been written by the Klan," said Bill Wilkinson, grand lizard of the KKK, in a widely-quoted endorsement. Could it have been otherwise?

IMPERIALISM AND FASCISM

To answer this question, we must delve briefly into the history of capitalism. When capitalism emerged out of the ashes of the old feudal society of serfs and lords, there were many small capitalist enterprises, located mainly in the towns and cities. As capitalism developed, the big fish began to eat the little fish – larger enterprises bought out smaller businesses or drove them out of business. Industrial nations began to colonize and enslave non-industrial nations. Eventually, over a period of centuries, capitalism reached its present stage of development, called **imperialism,** in which multi-national corporations, linked with huge banks and

backed by the armed might of their parent states, have divided among themselves the commerce of the entire world.

Russia reached this stage through a different route. The world's first successful socialist revolution took place there in 1917. The working class, under the leadership of the Bolshevik (communist) party, took the reins of power. They accomplished great things, not the least of which was the defeat of Nazi Germany, but power eventually was taken from them by a new class of capitalists, drawn from the ranks of the leaders and managers of the Soviet state and industry.

These new Soviet bosses are imperialists, just as their U.S. counterparts. The Russian ruling class is, in some ways, better prepared for imperialist war. They inherited from socialism a centrally-controlled industrial base. The state, the new capitalist class and the economic units are one and the same. We call this **state capitalism.** We also call the USSR **revisionist** because it has perverted socialist ideas while returning to capitalism.

In the early stages of capitalism, it was alright for the bosses to have relatively loosely confederated democratic states, as long as property and capitalism were protected. The present, imperialist stage, the highest and last stage of capitalism, requires a strictly controlled, centralized state. This state is necessary to control the larger working class and to engage other imperialists in more and more desperate struggles to divide the world. These inter-imperialist struggles are more fierce than the competition between earlier, smaller capitalists. Higher stakes are involved, and one imperialist can advance only at the expense of another. Today the main contradiction in the world is between U.S. and Soviet imperialism.

Fascism is the state required by imperialism. The Russian bosses want it. It is useless to plead with the ruling class to give us back their rotten bourgeois "democracy" and "freedoms" as the "liberals" would have us do. The bosses **must** move to fascism, and they **are** moving to fascism. For us, the working class, socialist revolution is the only answer. And this time, we will not allow the bosses to recapture power.

EL SALVADOR

El Salvador, a Central American country of four million people, has recently been the focus of US-USSR rivalry. Other hotspots in Latin America, Africa or the Middle East, may explode at any minute; many of the aspects of the inter-imperialist battle in El Salvador discussed below apply to these other areas as well.

U.S. imperialism has dominated Latin America since the 1890s and before. The Rockefeller family controls oil in Venezuela; the Grace family finances its own mercenary army to protect the holdings of United Fruit. Two hundred U.S. corporations have $8 billion invested in Central America, which provides them with over $1 billion yearly in profits! Writing in ***Common Sense*** in 1935, Marine Gen. Smedley Butler described how the U.S. ruling class built its Latin American fortunes:

> I spent thirty-three years and four months in active service as a member of our country's most agile military force – the Marine Corps. I spent most of my time being a high-class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street, and for the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer for capitalism.
>
> Thus I helped make Mexico and especially Tampico safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank to collect revenues in...I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909-1912. I helped make Honduras "right" for American Fruit companies in 1903. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916.

Sometimes, U.S.-sponsored fascist regimes do the dirty work. A few years after the events described above, the El Salvadoran oligarchy crushed a peasant uprising by slaughtering 30,000.

Today, El Salvador is again the scene of bloody revolution. Ninety-nine percent of the people earn less than $100 per year, while almost all of the industry and arable land are controlled by fourteen wealthy families. The present junta came into power promising reform, but has butchered over 10,000 workers and peasants in a return of terror. the ***London Sunday Times*** (Feb. 22, 1981) gave evidence of what kind of maniac murderers the U.S. rulers are supporting in El Salvador.

> The Salvador Army, along with their paramilitary supporters, massacred about 300 people in the village of Las Aradas on the border with Honduras in May, 1980. But Las Aradas was not even a guerrilla base. The Army only thought it might serve as a base of support for the guerrillas. For six hours, the Army and their paramilitary supporters attacked the village, killing everything in sight. The only escape for the villagers was to cross the river to the Honduras side of the border. But the Salvadoran troops shot at the men, women and children who tried to cross the river (many were already drowning because the river was very deep during the rainy season). One survivor said that some soldiers and Orden (the paramilitary group distinctive for their black shirts with skull-and-crossbone insignia) gathered children and babies together and threw them into the air

Troops of the fascist Salvadoran junta search arrested demonstrators. If the U.S.-backed junta loses control, U.S. troops might be sent in next.

> and then slashed them with long machetes. One soldier told the mother of one of the babies, "we're killing the children of subversion."

According to ***Le Monde Diplomatique,*** (Spanish edition, Jan. 1981):

> They killed in cold blood in a methodical way...cursing their victims for being dirty communists. They often used machetes to save bullets. One mother saw her pregnant daughter being dismembered. "They cut out her fetus, then they shot her with bullets."

There is no doubt that U.S. imperialism is supporting butchers as bad as the Nazis. This is what the bosses have in mind for us here!The U.S. government is sending hundreds of millions of dollars in economic and military aid to these butchers. Reminiscent of Vietnam, the aid includes helicopter gunships, military "advisors," and CIA land reform experts. Roy Prosterman, professor at the University of Washington, wrote the land reform program. He also wrote the genocidal "Land to the Tiller" program in Vietnam. Both reformed about 8% of the available land. The rest stays in the hands of the rich. The other side of the reform is the development of local leadership to carry out the plan. When local leaders are elected and identified by the citizens, the army comes and reforms them by blowing them away!

El Salvador is next door to Nicaragua; it borders Guatemala and Honduras on the north, and it lies a scant 150 miles from southern Mexico. The fascist Somoza regime in Nicaragua was overthrown in 1979 by the pro-Soviet Sandinista movement. The fighting in El Salvador is spilling over into Honduras and Guatemala, threatening the oil-rich regions of Mexico. Mexico already provides 9% of the U.S. oil needs, with reserves to be put into production there and in Guatemala. The U.S. bosses were not at all happy when Mexican President Portillo publicly supported the El Salvador resistance.

U.S. dominance in Central America is threatened for the first time in ninety years. Russia, the arch-enemy of U.S. imperialism, is masterminding the onslaught. Soviet trade with Latin America, excluding Cuba, increased tenfold between 1970 and 1977. One-third of the Soviet bloc's imports from "Third World" countries came from Latin America. Soviet credits to developing countries rose from 2% in the 1960s to 25% by the mid-70s. By the end of the decade, the Soviets were helping build 20 large-scale hydroelectric power plants in the area, including the Olmos Project in northern Peru, which will eventually be linked to the oil fields and to the Soviet-built fishing complex in Pieta. The Soviets are also assisting the Mexican bosses in nuclear reactor technology and are discussing with Brazilian officials a project to produce met-

allic titanium, important for aerospace and submarine construction. The Soviets are Argentina's chief grain and meat importers, and are training high Argentine army officers at a military college in Leningrad. Cuban, and therefore Soviet, influence among the Caribbean islands is also on the upsurge.

The Soviet-backed PCS ("Communist" Party of El Salvador) dominates the "Revolutionary Democratic Front" (FDR), a broad coalition leading the resistance in El Salvador. As befits the United Front (with the bosses) strategy of the USSR, the FDR includes the Catholic Church and "progressive" bosses. "The democratic sectors and the progressive bourgeoisie are not 'useful tools' but sectors with which we have **principled** agreement," says Jorge Mendez, FDR leader. These "progressive" bosses have included such "friends" as Napoleon Duarte, a Christian Democrat who ran on the Communist Party-United Front ticket in 1972. He is now the president of the fascist junta.

The Soviet Union and West Germany, through the PCS, are now pressuring the Front to negotiate with the junta. Meanwhile, the massacre of leftists continues. Apparently, the Soviet Union is willing to sacrifice any number of courageous anti-imperialist fighters to advance its own imperialist aims.

A similar broad coalition has called a number of demonstrations in the U.S. against U.S. intervention in El Salvador. Ted Kennedy hopes that this movement will propel him into the White House, although, ironically, it was his brother John who solidified U.S. imperialism in El Salvador. Reeking with pacifism, these alliances with "liberal" politicians and the bosses just lead us back into the arms of imperialism.

We reject alliances with the bosses – the bosses are the creators and the keepers of imperialism and fascism. We will not fight to put another set of bosses in the driver's seat. The Immigration and Naturalization Service recently attempted to deport a West Coast leader of the International Committee Against Racism (InCAR) to El Salvador, where he faced certain death at the hands of the fascist junta. After learning of the successful effort of hundreds of workers, students and soldiers to get him released, he wrote: "I am going to respond to this support by...winning a contingent of workers from my factory to march with us on May Day in Los Angeles, against U.S. intervention in El Salvador, against racist deportations, and for workers' revolution." (***Challenge,*** March 1981). It is these contingents of workers, students and soldiers that will put an end to imperialism, not alliances with this or that boss or liberal politician.

We, as workers and as soldiers, have more in common with El Salvadoran workers than with the brass or the bosses. Our weapons should be used against our tormentors – the brass and their ruling class masters – not the workers of El Salvador or anywhere else. We must organize a movement to take power from the imperialists, lest we shed tons of our blood as the bosses race headlong towards World War.

THE STATE AND THE ARMED FORCES

Imperialists impose their will through the state. This applies as much to oppressing workers at home as it does to exploiting "foreign" labor. The early capitalists developed the state with laws, sources of revenue and enforcers to ensure their continued economic, political and moral dominance. It now serves their imperialist offspring, and them alone.

The armed forces are the key element in the organization of the state. Upon their stability and general condition depend the stability of the state as a whole. The proletariat's chance of overthrowing the bourgeoisie and smashing the bourgeois state in the event of an immediate revolutionary situation depends in great measure on the degree of disaffection within the bosses' armed forces. "Unless the revolution assumes a mass character and affects the troops, there can be no question of serious struggle," said Lenin, leader of the Russian revolution.

Revolution did "assume a mass character" and "affected the troops" during the fall of 1917 in Russia. ***Soldatskaia Pravda,*** the Bolshevik soldiers' newspaper, published 50,000 copies a day immediately preceding the revolution that November. "Those (soldiers) who read moderate newspapers are looked upon as 'bourgeois' and 'counter- revolutionaries,' " according to Russian army intelligence, Oct. 2-13, 1917.

The Bolsheviks did revolutionary work in the Tsarist armed forces for thirteen years. According to the official ***History of the Communist Party,***

> The party agitated for fraternization between the soldiers of the warring armies, emphasizing the fact that the world bourgeoisie was the enemy, and that the war could be ended only by converting the imperialist war into a civil war, and turning one's weapons into a civil war against one's own bourgeoisie and its government.

Years of hard work behind this revolutionary line eventually paid off. The young Bolshevik sailor, Flerovsky, described the scene on the eve of the revolution at Kronstadt, the naval base across the bay from St. Petersburg (now Leningrad):

> It is doubtful whether anyone closed

his eyes that night. The Naval Club was jammed with sailors, soldiers, and workers...The revolutionary staff drew up a detailed operations plan, designated participating units, made an inventory of available supplies, and issued instructions...When the planning was finished...I went into the street. Everywhere there was heavy, but muffled traffic. Groups of soldiers and sailors were making their way to the naval dockyard. By the light of the torches we could see just the first ranks of serious determined faces...only the rumble of the automobiles, moving supplies from the fortress warehouses to the ships, disturbed the silence of the night.

– *The Bolsheviks Come to Power,* Rabinovitch

Kerensky, head of the Russian capitalist government, gave his final order that same night. The St. Petersburg garrison was told to move to the front to fight the German troops, so-called enemies during World War I. Instead, they "moved" Kerensky & Co. out of power and helped world history turn over a new leaf. These troops were followed by their fellows throughout Russia. **Turn the Guns Around!** became the mass slogan.

The fighting did not stop immediately after the insurrection. Counter-revolutionaries and fourteen invading foreign armies tried to crush the new-born socialist state. Revolutionary soldiers, sailors and workers had to build Red Guard detachments and, eventually, a Red Army of over three million. They fought for more than three years before the invasion and counter-revolution were defeated.

For much of this time, the Red Army had no officer corps. Revolutionary leaders wore no special insignia and had no special conveniences. Each soldier was given only what he needed to survive and continue fighting. The counter-revolutionary Trotsky initiated many attempts to re-insitute the old Tsarist officers in the name of "efficiency." Time and time again, workers, often under the leadership of the young Bolshevik Stalin, thwarted these plans.

Despite these spartan conditions, there was no shortage of volunteers for the Red Army:

> The workers of the Pipe works, Siemens-Halske and Possel's came straight from their work to the commandant, requesting that they be given arms and sent to the firing line. During the day, 3,000 rifles were issued, and still workers came pouring in. There were not enough rifles to go around, so the workers took picks and shovels, and went off to dig trenches...
>
> The road to Pulkovo was lined with endless columns of revolutionary detachments marching in the pouring rain. They were overtaken by motor trucks filled with armed workers. Old men, and even youths, hastened to the front. The trains to Gatchina were packed, and still men struggled to get in. Red Guards and sailors clung to the roofs and steps of the railway cars. There was a perfect rush to the place from where the dull booming of guns was heard...
>
> At the front, thousands of men and women toiled in the wet and mud, digging trenches and erecting barbed-wire entanglements...
>
> *History of the Civil War in the USSR,*

The working class troops of the invading imperialist armies, including U.S. troops, mutinied in the face of the Red Army. "Hands Off Russia!" became the battle cry of workers and soldiers around the world. The Red Army was organized under the communist slogan "from each according to commitment, to each according to need." Its soldiers fought brilliantly and they won!

'Unless the revolution assumes mass character and affects the troops, there can be no question of serious struggle.'

These soldiers were not much different from ourselves. They had similar grievances, although intensified by the World War. Among their original demands were less harassment, more leaves and discharges. They came to learn, however, that these reforms were illusions; that the only hope for them and their families was revolution. Patient, consistent **basebuilding** by a few communists (there were fewer than 100 Bolsheviks in the whole Baltic Fleet only a few months before the revolution) was crucial. Millions of soldiers, sailors and workers voluntarily gave up leaves and discharges to fight alongside their communist buddies under the most severe conditions, and to fight for workers' power.

The Chinese communist army fought the bourgeoisie for 22 years, in five major campaigns, each as bloody as a world war, before taking power in 1949. They were the most democratic army in world history. Mass meetings were held to discuss politics, strategy and tac-

Chinese workers, peasants and soldiers on the Long March. The supply system was a way of life to them, not a burden.

tics, sometimes in the heat of battle. There were no special privileges of rank and no wages. Instead, everybody lived according to the "supply system:"

> The supply system was a system of treatment adopted at a time of the revolutionary war when the financial and economic situation was rather acute. It was built on the premise that the revolutionary workers possessed a high degree of political consciousness. Its special features were: On the basis of the minimum subsistence requirements of revolutionary workers, the state was to supply themn with a definite quantity of the essential articles of livelihood...There was this little difference between the treatment accorded the cadres at higher levels and the general rank-and-file government workers, insofar as their personal requirements were concerned. It may be described as a measure in keeping with the military communist way of life.
>
> *–Tu Shao-po & Wang I-cheng, 1955.*

Agnes Smedley, in her book, ***The Great Road,*** records one of the songs sung by the Red Army in that period:

> *Our Red Army has three great tasks:*
> *To destroy imperialism and the feudal forces,*
> *To carry out the agrarian revolution,*
> *To establish the people's sovereignty.*
> *To each according to his needs,*
> *From each according to his ability.*

Throughout this difficult period, the Chinese Communist Party mobilized millions under the communist "supply system." It comes as no surprise, then, that millions revolted against the restoration of capitalist ranks and wage scales in 1955. That revolt helped lead to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of the 1960s. One of the firstpolemics against the right-wing trend was *Break Away From the Idea of Bourgeois Rights,* by Chang Ch'un-Ch'iao, later to become a prominent figure in the Cultural Revolution. He wrote:

> To support the PLA (People's Liberation Army), thousands of militiamen followed the Army in their march to the South. They led the same life of military communism as the Army. They did not aim at becoming officials or getting rich. No idea of wages, let alone "piece-wages," entered their minds...After the nationwide liberation, this life of military communism marked by "supply system" was still very popular...Comrades who were inured to the life of supply system did not covet the wage system...but shortly after wards this system of life was subjected to the impact of bourgeois right. The idea of bourgeois right has its kernel in heirarchy. In the view of persons imbued with the idea of bourgeois right, the supply system was undesirable...There was nothing strange in such arguments brought forth by the bourgeoisie. But

> soon a number of party cadres were subjected to the impact of this idea. Among them were heard more criticism of the drawbacks of supply system, while more talks were heard about the merits of the wage system...In a word, the communist supply system which ensured victory of the Chinese revolution, was condemned by some people as a serious offense which must be punished.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was defeated. The concept of an "armed people" advocated by Lenin in 1917 was replaced by a standing army, an organ of the new "red" bourgeoisie. Despite this defeat, the life and death fight against revisionism was advanced. For the first time, tens of millions of workers exposed imperialists hiding behind the comnmunist name. We are eternally grateful to them.

Members of our party have also felt the excitement described earlier by that young Bolshevik sailor. During the Vietnam era, our party led more than one GI rebellion. ***Challenge-Desafío,*** our party's newspaper, was read by thousands. Its pages recounted dozens of revolts involving thousands of soldiers and sailors in every part of the world. Even a bosses' rag, ***The Overseas Weekly,*** had to admit, in a headline, that **GIs Declare War on the Army.**

The key battles were against racism and the war. The watershed rebellion of the GI movement occurred in August, 1968. One hundred black GIs, twenty-five of them Vietnam vets, refused riot duty in Chicago at the Democratic Convention. GI rebellions intensified, reaching a crescendo of two every week during the summer of 1971, according to official army records.

The resistance became more violent. From 1969 to 1971, the Army lists 551 recorded fraggings – blowing up officers with fragmentation grenades detonated by mutinous GIs. Special forensic medical stations were built to determine if officers had been killed by the Vietnamese guerrillas or by their own men! Every major stockade revolted; many were burned to the ground. The Long Binh Jail (LBJ) in Vietnam was torched many times, the longest rebellion over the beating of a black inmate.

As the U.S. government was forced to remove ground forces from Vietnam because of continuous mutinies, it relied more and more on the Navy and the Air Force. Resistance promptly mushroomed in these once-elite forces – particularly in the Navy. The largest rebellion occurred on the carrier Constellation. Aptly described by the ***New York Times*** as "the first mass mutiny in the history of the U.S. Navy," the Constellation revolt was anti-racist. Two hundred and fifty sailors were to be given administrative discharges with "less than honorable" papers. Fearing that these punitive discharges would go to anti-racist activists on board, a multi-racial group of over 100 sailors staged a sit-in in the after mess deck. Capt. Ward, in consultation with the commander of the Pacific Fleet, Adm. Zumwalt, allowed some 130 sailors to go ashore as a beach party to cool things off. They refused to return! So great was the brass' fear of multi-racial rebellion that they gave up and reassigned the sailors to shore duty.

By November 1972, the ***New York Times*** reported that:

> The founder of a confederation of black soldiers (U.S.) in Germany said today that organized servicemen, blacks and whites, have moved from a "position of conciliation to revolutionary, defensive and violent stands" because of continued racism in the armed forces.

We think they have the right idea!

The bosses are today trying to rewrite the history of the Vietnam War. At a Vietnam Veterans Month gathering earlier this year, General Westmoreland, former Army Chief of Staff, agreed with President Reagan that Vietnam

Turn the Guns Around!

Little brother, little sister–
Got to watch where we are bound.
Need to stand up to those bosses,
Got to turn those guns around!

Try to split us up the middle,
Try to stop us, keep us down –
We won't listen any longer:
Gonna turn those guns around!

Hear your racist, sexist garbage –
Getting tired of the sound.
Hear the workers scream for justice,
'Cause we'll turn the guns around!

No more Hitlers, no more Nixons,
No more bosses, knock them down!
Give the power to the workers,
Let's just turn the guns around!

With PLP and InCAR
The leadership we've found,
So we'll stand up to the bosses,
And turn the guns around!

was a noble cause. "America was defeated by propaganda and a few domestic saboteurs," he said. (***Seattle Times,*** May 26) The Nazis sang the same tune as they prepared to launch World War II. No amount of lying will erase the fact that fragging became a favorite pastime of the U.S. troops in Vietnam.

We would, perhaps, have had socialism today had we focussed our energy more on revolution and less on reform. We shall not make that mistake again.

TODAY'S ARMED FORCES

GENERAL,
your tank is a mighty vehicle.
It shatters the forest and crushes
a hundred men.
But it has one defect;
It needs a driver.

GENERAL,
your bomber is awesome.
It flies faster than a hurricance and bears
more than a hundred elephants.
But it has one defect;
It needs a mechanic.

GENERAL,
a man is quite expendable.
He can fly and he can kill.
But he has one defect;
He can think.

And because he can think,
communist ideas will help him understand how the real world works
and how forces come into being to
change the world.

GENERAL,
from this beginning we will
turn this war machine of imperialism
back upon you and your masters
to complete your end.

GENERAL,
a man is quite expendable.
Just like an artillery shell
or poison gas.
But he has one defect;
He will serve the interests of his class,
now,
and yours no longer!
– adapted from a poem by Bertoldt Brecht

Brecht captures the fundamental contradiction the bosses face as they try to rebuild their armed might. The working class has no reason to fight for the imperialists and every reason to make revolution! This contradiction entwines its way throughout the armed forces, manifesting itself in many forms.

After massive rebellions during the Vietnam era, the bosses eliminated the draft. The "voluntary" army is only a temporary tactic. The brass hopes to rebuild its cadre, while avoiding the repercussions of a draft. The pre-World War II German Freikorps did much the same thing. Many of the Wehrmacht (German regular army) officers and NCOs were trained in these "peace-time" units. Make no mistake about it, the bosses will be forced to re-introduce the draft. No imperialist power has ever fought a major war with an all-volunteer force. In a recent ***Wall Street Journal*** article, entitled *U.S. Military Readiness Requires A Draft,* General Waste-More-Land puts it this way: "None of the countries that depend on the volunteer system carry major global responsibilities. America does."

There is already an economic draft. Working class youth, 50% of them black and Latin, are forced into the armed forces by unemployment. Albert Angrisani, Assistant Secretary of Labor and former vice-president of Chase Manhattan Bank, told ***Business Week*** he plans to eliminate CETA and "move job-training into. . .the army." The youth forced into the armed forces are the most likely to rebel, posing an even bigger dilemma for the bosses. Our party, therefore, concentrates its energies within the armed forces among these sympathetic youth.

Despite a rebellious rank and file, the armed forces still belong to the bosses. The armed forces are organized on bourgeois principles. The first is that "money talks." Like all capitalist enterprises, the military pays the bosses, in this case the brass and lifers, much more than the average GI. "The taxpayer [should] get the most defense for his tax dollar by raising the pay of the careerist and reducing the pay of the recruit," says Westmoreland, complaining to the ***WSJ*** that colonels get paid only eight times as much as GIs. "It is not in the best interests of military training to pay a new soldier wages that will support a 'pad' in the town nearby, a 'hot rod' on the highway, or a wife."

The U.S. armed forces rely on bourgeois discipline. A communist army, we have seen, runs primarily on political commitment. Since it is unlikely that many soldiers will be committed to fight against their class interests, the imperialist brass uses harassment, incarceration and the threat of execution. The brass is stepping up harassment as they prepare for imperialist war. "There are even some indications that military discipline will be brought out of mothballs," editorializes the ***Army Times.*** They mean that the current epidemic of GI harassment will increase. Huge numbers of Article 15s, given out for little or no reason, particularly to black and Latin soldiers, are already the order of the day.

Part of the Army's stepped-up harassment is a sharp increase in drug busts, including

mass raids. Recently, large numbers of MPs with drug dogs surrounded a barracks at the Philadelphia Naval Base, and searched everyone's belongings, allowing no one to move. Dozens were arrested for possession of marijuana. On this front, the bosses are once again caught in the web of their own hypocrisy. The armed forces promoted drugs, particularly in Vietnam, as a way of stopping mass rebellion. Many soldiers and sailors succumbed to heroin addiction, with the heroin being supplied by CIA front groups. But now that the Army brass is trying to gear up for World War III, they are trying to push drugs **out of** instead of **into** the Army. These hypocrites also use drug busts to "get" whoever they want.

Drugs are no good. They only seem attractive compared to what the decaying capitalist system has to offer us. The working class does not need to get high. We need a firm grip on reality to destroy capitalism, its drugs and its drug culture with socialist revolution.

The armed forces are sexist. The bosses now want more women in the military because of personnel shortages. In contrast to the full and equal participation of women in the early Chinese and Russian Red Armies, the bosses' armed forces remain as sexist as ever. Sexist chants like "If GIs were bricks in a pile, and I was a mason, I'd lay them all in style" are often the first introduction to army life for the new recruit. Sexist job discrimintion is still a way of life in the military. Rape is tolerated, while the rape of enemy civilians is almost condoned. Black and Latin women are doubly oppressed. Our party calls on men and women soldiers to unite against the brass. Our party fights sexism on all fronts, particularly by winning women soldiers and "dependents" to revolutionary leadership.

The armed forces are anti-worker. The brass tries to separate the new recruit from his or her working-class origins with short haircuts to set the soldiers apart, on-post barracks and attempts to break up the marriages of young recruits. The military has been ordered to bust strikes, anti-war actions and ghetto rebellions. Unfortunately (for the bosses, that is) the troops have often sided with their fellow workers, disobeying the orders of officers, en masse.

Racism is the sharpest contradiction within the armed forces. Racism, as we know, is capitalism's invention. Humankind was first divided into "races" by the bourgeois intellectual Johann Friedrich Blumenbach in ***Natural Variety of Mankind,*** published in 1775, to justify the profitable slave trade. Racist profits now reach into the billions. The armed forces' mission is to protect this racist system.

The military has always been racist. All units were segregated until after World War II, with black units usually led by white officers. Black and Latin GIs have always gotten twice the number of Article 15s, twice the number of court martials, twice the number of stockade sentences for twice as long. Racist medical care is the rule, since non-white soldiers are concentrated among the lower ranks. Enlisted personnel are given bigger stitches as a matter of policy, resulting in larger scars. Black and Latin enlisted men more often get "bad paper" – less-than-honorable discharges, a lifelong curse. Even if a non-white soldier does get an honorable discharge, he or she will probably leave without a marketable skill. Blacks and Latins usually get the unskilled MOSs (military occupation specialties, or job classifications), often tracked into these dead-end jobs by racist IQ tests.

Racism intensifies and becomes more violent as the bosses institute fascism. Today, the brass tolerates and even promotes the Klan. "If this group (the KKK) exists, it has done nothing to injure the interests of the military, so we have taken no action," said Lt. Col. Daniel Brown, the base information officer at the Marines' Camp Pendleton in 1977. That wasn't exactly true. The Marine Corps tried and sentenced fourteen black Marines who smashed an on-base meeting of the "non-existent" Klan!

The working class has no reason to fight for the imperialists – and every reason to make revolution!

The military uses the fascist Klan selectively. The Klan attempts to intimidate rebellious black and Latin EM, thus undermining multi-racial fightback. For instance, the brass unleashed the Klan on the carrier USS Coral Sea when sailors became uneasy about their presence in the Persian Gulf during the Iranian crisis. Two hundred black, Latin, Filipino and some white sailors met on deck to protest the Klan. The frantic brass physically kept more sympathetic white sailors from joining their fellows. The International Committee Against Racism (InCAR) and the party did, however, bring together a multi-racial group of these sailors

with Iranian students during a San Francisco port call.

Party members diligently build multi-racial organization of workers, students and soldiers. No movement in the military, or anywhere else, can succeed without attacking racism. Racism is the cornerstone of fascism. Hence it is the centerpiece of the bosses' strategy. Every racist attack weakens the whole working class. If we allow the brass to use us to suppress a ghetto rebellion against racist budget cuts, what's to stop them from using us to bust a strike or crush an anti-war demonstration next? If we allow the brass to separate the more militant "minority," from the more numerous "majority," every soldier becomes easy pickings. Ultimately, if we want to eliminate racism, we must eliminate the system that gave it birth and nurtures it – capitalism.

A PROGRAM FOR GIs

A program for GIs against racism, fascism and imperialism would include the following demands:

- Death to the Klan and Nazis.
- Fight the racist Uniform Code of Military Justice – the military legal system.
- No "bad paper."
- No job discrimination!
- No riot control duty!
- Fight racist and inadequate medical care!
- Dismiss any lifer or officer using racist slurs or performing racist acts.
- Multi-racial, multi-national unity!
- Smash apartheid – U.S. out of South Africa!
- U.S. out of El Salvador!
- No racist, imperialist war!
- Build InCAR!
- Fight for Socialism! Join PLP!

As the fascist ruling class intensifies racism, it sinks deeper into the quagmire of its own contradictions. Anti-racist rebellion, and anti-Klan rebellion in particular, are re-emerging in the military, led by InCAR and our party. Hoping to head off revolution in an army that is now 50% black and Latin, the bosses' press has anointed a number of nationalist "leaders."

The basic premise of nationalism – like the basic premise of racism – is the suicidal concept of all-class unity. Racism and nationalism urge white workers to ally with white bosses, black workers to ally with black bosses, Latin workers to unite with Latin bosses, and so on. Our party says: **a boss is a boss is a boss.** Of course, in the U.S. today, almost all of the big bosses are white, but there are black, Latin and other minority capitalists, and they suck surplus value from the hides of "their" workers and make profits from them, just as surely as their white counterparts. Black lifers have the same relation to GIs as do white lifers. Chicano cops carry guns and break strikes just like white cops. Nationalism – whether it's the nationalism of "my country," "my roots," "my race," "my people," or whatever – is a capitalist idea because it retains the fundamental class relationships of the profit system. From the point of view of workers, nationalism is always a loser.

Jesse Jackson is one of the nationalist agents of fascism. During the trial at Camp Pendleton, the brass gave him the red carpet treatment, complete with chauffeured limousine and escort. Refusing to defend the anti-fascist fighters on trial, he was willing to "let the chips fall where they may." His aims became clearer when he pleaded, "We must put an end to racial discord in the military because it is a threat to our (the bosses') national security." The brass uses open fascists like the Klan alternately with social fascists like Jackson – the Klan for the violently racist, and Jackson for would-be anti-racist fighters. Both lead us into the arms of the imperialists.

The bosses' war plans themselves are racist as well as imperialist. The ruling class is well aware of this; it presents them with still more problems. "If open conflict should break out in South Africa, and in particular if the communists should choose to help wage a 'war of liberation' against the white regime, the United States (bosses) would face difficult questions. . ."The resulting American debate could quickly develop divisive. . .overtones," says a just-released Rockefeller Foundation report, in a marvel of understatement. Nonetheless, the U.S. is pursuing a policy of friendship and cooperation withthe South African apartheid government in a desperate anti-Soviet gamble. The brass had the unmitigated gall to justify wholesale slaughter of the Vietnamese by branding them as less than human with the racist slur "gook" while 50% of the U.S. front-line troops were black and Latin. Can we expect anything different today?

THE MAIN CONTRADICTION

This leads us back to the main contradiction – the bosses must fight a world war, while we soldiers, and workers, have no interest in such a war. Many GIs will go AWOL if they get combat orders; some already have their airplane tickets. Some say they won't personally fight against their working class brothers and sisters. Unfortunately, this will not stop the holocaust. Under capitalism, imperialist wars are inevitable. Only communist organizing within the armed forces and among the working class will turn imperialist war into a class war for socialism. This is not an easy road, but it is the on-

Communist and anti-racist organizing inside the bosses' armed forces can win these troops to turn imperialist war into a war for workers' power.

ly sane road.

Our party does not welcome imperialist war; neither are we afraid of it. The first socialist state grew out of the ashes of World War I. The defeat of the Japanese fascists and their Nazi allies in World War II led to revolution in China. If the ruling class starts this world war, we'll finish it and them. We don't say this flippantly, without realizing the terrible price the working class will pay for nuclear war. But the fact remains: the more the liberals and revisionists cry "Peace!" the more the bosses make war.

Our class must turn the imperialist war into a socialist civil war. This historic task is impossible without a movement in the military to turn the guns around on the brass and bosses. At the front, we should fraternize with the troops of "enemy" armies. The armed forces of other imperialist powers are made up of workers, just as ours are.

Patriotism, another form of nationalism, is a bosses' game. Loyalty to the U.S. means loyalty to the bosses' state. We have more in common with workers and soldiers throughout the world than with any boss here. **Proletarian internationalism** is our answer to the bosses' patriotic crap. We should reserve our bullets for the brass and their ruling class masters.

A MASS COMMUNIST PARTY – GENERAL STAFF FOR REVOLUTION

To talk of turning an imperialist war into revolution is ludicrous without a mass-based revolutionary party. Who is to coordinate and lead the attack on capitalism when it becomes apparent that workers can no longer live in the old way? Without a general staff there would be rebellion, but rebellion to no real end. Our party, the Progressive Labor Party, aims to be a mass revolutionary party.

The Progressive Labor Party fights for socialist revolution. Only under workers' power – the dictatorship of the proletariat achieved through armed struggle – can we crush the power of the capitalist bosses who use racism, sexism, fascism and imperialist war to make profits from our labor and to maintain their murderous system. Our party is multi-racial and international – the class interest of workers stops at no borders.

Our party newspaper, ***Challenge-Desafío,*** spreads the news of our struggles, and of the ideas behind them, so that we may learn from them how to win.

Selling ***Challenge-Desafío*** and joining the Progressive Labor Party are crucial first steps for every soldier and sailor. Every ***Challenge*** sold and every new recruit is a nail in the bosses'

coffin. We can then repeat the process tenfold, winning our friends and bunkmates. Building our party into a mass party is the key task today.

The historic mission of socialist society is to advance to a more egalitarian communist society. Communism functions under the slogan "from each according to commitment, to each according to need." The revolutionary base we build in the armed forces today will lay the foundation for a communist tomorrow, free of exploitation, racism, fascism and war.

The words of the ***Communist Manifesto*** written in 1848 by the founders of our movement, Marx and Engels, hold true today, for soldiers and workers throughout the world:

> Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a commmunistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

Patriotism, another form of nationalism, is a bosses' game. Loyalty to the U.S. means loyalty to the bosses' state. We have more in common with workers and soldiers throughout the world than with any boss here. **Proletarian internationalism** is our answer to the bosses' patriotic crap. We should reserve our bullets for the brass and their ruling class masters.

A MASS COMMUNIST PARTY – GENERAL STAFF FOR REVOLUTION

To talk of turning an imperialist war into revolution is ludicrous without a mass-based revolutionary party. Who is to coordinate and lead the attack on capitalism when it becomes apparent that workers can no longer live in the old way? Without a general staff there would be rebellion, but rebellion to no real end. Our party, the Progressive Labor Party, aims to be a mass revolutionary party.

The Progressive Labor Party fights for socialist revolution. Only under workers' power – the dictatorship of the proletariat achieved through armed struggle – can we crush the power of the capitalist bosses who use racism, sexism, fascism and imperialist war to make profits from our labor and to maintain their murderous system. Our party is multi-racial and international – the class interest of workers stops at no borders.

Our party newspaper, ***Challenge-Desafío,*** spreads the news of our struggles, and of the ideas behind them, so that we may learn from them how to win.

Selling ***Challenge-Desafío*** and joining the Progressive Labor Party are crucial first steps for every soldier and sailor. Every ***Challenge*** sold and every new recruit is a nail in the bosses'

coffin. We can then repeat the process tenfold, winning our friends and bunkmates. Building our party into a mass party is the key task today.

The historic mission of socialist society is to advance to a more egalitarian communist society. Communism functions under the slogan "from each according to commitment, to each according to need." The revolutionary base we build in the armed forces today will lay the foundation for a communist tomorrow, free of exploitation, racism, fascism and war.

The words of the ***Communist Manifesto*** written in 1848 by the founders of our movement, Marx and Engels, hold true today, for soldiers and workers throughout the world:

> Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a commmunistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.
>
> **Workers of the World, Unite!**

A young soldier in the Tsarist Army wrote the following letter to his family in the midst of World War I. It never reached them, but was later retrieved from the files of the Moscow censor, and translated by Allan Wildmen in ***The End of the Russian Imperial Army:***

> At Easter, the Austrians came out together and congratulated us for the holidays, and we walked up and down between the wire; then they came to our trenches and we to theirs and concluded a separate peace, no firing at each other. Since then, to this very day, there has been almost no firing.
>
> On April 18, they rolled out the white flag and the red. . .The Germans cried "Pan! (a Polish greeting) Come out to the middle." Theirs and ours came together; theirs said "Rus, no shooting, peace!" Ours answered, "Absolutely right, we need peace". . .They gave out cigarettes. Then our officers ordered the batteries to open fire, and we took off. Even so, our soldiers still get together with the Germans; they come to our trenches and we go to theirs. They haven't fired a shot in over a month, but always cry, "Rus, don't shoot!" They say, "If you shoot, we'll shoot back, but you know who gets it in the neck if that happens – the infantry, yours and ours." Our side still continues to shoot. Our soldiers are saying "make peace," but the command still holds out for war to victory. But something's going to happen soon.

In his memory and the memory of the struggling international working class, let us answer: **Socialist revolution will happen soon!**

GIs' Letters to Challenge

Dear ***Challenge:***

Well, how do I start this-...Things were going pretty well here. Some people knew a lot and a lot of people knew a little – about 5 or 6 people knew that I am a communist and a bunch of others knew that I am some kind of radical.

Last week in class, for example, I spoke up, attacking the equal opportunity program in the Army-...for being racist. It started a good discussion, with people agreeing and disagreeing. It also won me a lot of respect, especially from the black women in my platoon.

My basebuilding is the best part of my work, especially with Y, a woman from Philadelphia. She knows all about PLP and we are buddies. And my basebuilding is what helped me when the shit hit the fan.

Now for the story – I talk a lot about our Party's ideas. I want almost everyone to know that I'm a communist, and I got a little lax about security. People who I would never tell about the Party or InCAR overheard me. On top of that, there were rumors going around that there was a spy here. According to the drill sergeant, they went around asking until they got answers.

They called me into the barracks with Lt. Williams and read me my rights. I've never been so scared in my life. They searched my locker and took all my literature, some letters from J., and one letter from another friend.

I then sat in an air-conditioned office for three hours with my training leader while DS (drill sergeant) Henry and Williams ran around like chickens with their heads cut off. I was still scared, but no one knew but me...all the time, I was thinking what they could do to me: recycle me, shoot me for treason, kick me out, jail me, take away my money, or nothing at all. They did nothing. They called me in, said I was to continue my training, not to solicit any other GIs, and that they'd "appreciate it" if I got anymore lit, to let them have it. They also said they would probably return the literature they confiscated.

Now for the good part: everyone knows that I am a communist and they are glad I'm back. Everyone is talking about communism, and a lot of women have expressed support for me. Everyone wants to know what communism is, wants to talk to me, wants to read the paper (I am anxious to have more sent). My basebuilding saved me. If these women didn't know about my ideas and respect me for them, this incident could have isolated me completely, but now we'll get some regular ***C-D*** readers, maybe some InCAR members and some PL recruits out of it.

The incident moved Y closer. She immediately told me what everyone said about it. She was angrier than I was...Y is also more of a fighter than I am. I was hesitant to jump on people I thought told. Y didn't waste a second. Her attitude was that they were ass-kissers anyway. They would have told if given the chance. She isn't afraid to let let her enemies know who they are-...She'll be a real asset to the party when she joins.

While I was writing this letter, three women stopped by to talk. They wanted to know what happened, what PLP is, how I got involved, etc. After our brief conversations, their response was "that sure makes a lot of sense," or "I never thought about it like that," etc...

I guess I have to start taking the ruling class more seriously. They weren't prepared to do anything this time, but soon they will be. They are not just a bunch of morons, they're organized, so we have to be, too. If I had been more aggressive in talking to people, maybe others would have responded like my comrade Y. My biggest fear was not that the brass would find me out, but that they'd find out before I had a chance to speak to my fellow GIs. Right now, the situation here is good. I have to take advantage of it immediately. Hatred of the system is strong, but so is the cynicism that says nothing can be done about it...only communist ideas will help GIs and others to face and fight the bigger attacks to come. But we have to get our ideas out to people before those attacks make their appearance.

Comradely, 'GI K'

Dear **Challenge:**

Here are the cards of the new [InCAR] members. We'll send the money next week because we don't get paid until then. I sent these in now so that people will be able to get the ***Arrow*** as soon as it comes out.

The work in the military is going well. The brass and their lackeys really push racism here – and that opens the field for anti-racist and revolutionary organization.

The other day, our platoon sergeant told the Latin soldiers that they couldn't speak Spanish because a woman recruit called him a "horse-face" in Spanish. Another sergeant told him what she had said. After the confrontation, the sergeant had to back off.

The great thing was that all the soldiers banded together and told the sergeant how full of shit he was, and that everyone had the right to speak any language they knew. The struggle also brought me closer to the Latin soldiers.

Could you please send me 100 ***Arrows?*** If it turns out that we need more, we'll let you know. We have established an InCAR steering committee on the base, and it looks we'll need the extra papers, and any literature you can send us.

Comradely, Soldier Sara

Dear **Challenge:**

Things are going well. I already showed ***Challenge*** to 3 guys here at my new base. One of the guys told me about how he beat the shit out of a Klansman in basic training. It was a group of four black and two white guys that cornered the open Klanner. He said the Klanner was mouthing off all the time, so they took care of him. The soldier told me that he was very glad to read in ***C-D*** that there is something being done about the Klan. My roommates also liked the paper. One guy is from Alabama and the other is from Georgia. Both are black. We have been spending a lot of time together. I bought a car with some advance pay, and we go to the beach a lot.

My job is pretty good. They sent me to a class for operating portable generators. At the class, one guy in my company was complaining about the harassment from the sergeants (there are a lot of Article 15s – disciplinary punishments). So the teacher, who is a Vietnam vet, told some stories. He said that sergeants like that usually got fragged. He said everyone, including the brass, smoked dope. But the

GIs' Letters to Challenge

best part was when he told us about a commander who found a booby-trapped grenade under his bunk. What a pity it didn't go off! I plan to get as close as I can to the guy who was complaining. He feels he got tricked into re-enlisting. He has a wife and now hates the army. So does his wife. Right now I am in the process of making friends. I'll be here for over a year, so I can make some friendships.

I also saw some Klan graffiti in the bathroom in my shop. Someone wrote "Death to the Klan!" over it. Then someone else wrote "I hate the Klan even though I'm white." It look good here.

This will be the first May Day I've missed in four years, but I'll be marching with you in spirit. Give my regards to all the comrades.

G.I. Joe

Dear Challenge:

The bosses are in big trouble. Little do they know that the very base of their power is eroding under them. I recently joined the National Guard in a large industrial Midwestern city. This past weekend a comrade and I attended our first "drill" – the Guard's term for their regular monthly meetings. We were put in a special group of new recruits for initiation to the army. Within five minutes of our arrival, the officer in charge was making some racist cracks about one of the enlisted men in the unit who was of Arab descent. Although there were training films on first aid, lessons in marching and just sitting around, the real substance of the training was the constant barrage of racist and sexist jokes, wisecracks and behavior initiated by the officer-teacher. After a very short while it was difficult to endure.

The other side of miitary racism and sexism is, of course, anti-racism and building a PLP fraction and InCAR. We wasted no time in talking with our fellow recruits about the racist shit coming from the officer. They agreed tht he was a jerk and expressed interest in InCAR when we told them about it. Two days later one of them joined, making the first step in the struggle to smash racism in the military.

The opportunities to build PLP and InCAR inside the the Guard are vast. During the course of the week end, we encountered a guardsman who had recently attended an InCAR forum at a nearby university. He, too was interested in joining, and was glad to meet us in the Guard. He is especially concerned about the growth of the Klan and other violent racist organizations.

Anti-rascist sentiment, from our limited experience, seems to run high in the Guard. We overheard a number of enlisted men making cracks about their officers, particularly the one mentioned above, reflecting, no doubt, the natural class antagonisms which are part of military life. InCAR and PLP ought to flourish in this environment, provided we do our work right.

The bosses really are in big trouble. Their army is built on false promises of job opportunities and blatant racism and sexism. The fight against these forms of capitalist oppression exists right now. It needs our leadership. If our first weekend is any indication of the revolutionary potential inside the military, then let the imperialists start their war. We will finish it – once and for all.

A Midwest Comrade

Dear Challenge:

I joined the Army National Guard as part of the PLP summer project. I am presently going through Basic Training and AIT (Advanced Industrial Training). The purpose of this project is two-fold. First and most importantly, we hope to expand the political base of PLP and InCAR within the armed forces. Project participants are working to make political contacts and sell *C-D* subscriptions and InCAR memberships. When we return to our local National Guard units, we will continue our political organizing. Our goal will be to build PLP and InCAR to reverse, or at least neutralize, the deadly role of the National Guard in breaking strikes, crushing rebellions, and protests, and murdering workers and students.

The second purpose is to gain military trainiing for more of our Party members. We must never forget that our goal of building a socialist society here in the U.S. and around the world can only be accomplished through armed insurrection and protracted warfare. The time for us to lead the U.S. working class to liberation from capitalism will probably occur within the next 20 years, during the third imperialist world war. Threfore, it is by no means too soon for us to begin to prepare our Party and ourselves militarily as well as politically for the great tasks that lie ahead.

The training that a soldier receives in Basic is saturated harassment, humiliation, and intimidation. The purpose of this is to try to break the spirit and will to resist of the new soldier in an attempt to turn him or her into a mindless order-following machine. While political indoctrination is also heavy, it is secondary to pure intimidation as the chief method of getting soldiers to fight in a war against their class interests. Many soldiers fight back against this treatment, both individualy and collectively. This occurs in the face of the treat of Article 15s (sentences in the stockade), extra duty and athe use of PT (physical training) as a means of physical torture. I will describe some of my and other soldiers experiences fighting back on an individual level.

During my week-long stay at the Ft. Jackson reception station, I had my first real run-in with a sergeant. While being issued clothing, I complained about the incorrect fit. This upset my processing sergeant. As I was getting dressed, he called out, "Hey, clown, I don't want any more trouble from you," referring to me. I purposely did not respond. He continued to yell out, "Hey, clown, did you hear what I said, I am talking to you." I still did not respond. Finally, I got up and turned to him and told him, "My name is Pvt. ....., not clown." Needless to say, the sergeant became furious. He even challenged me to meet him later to fight. The incident earned me the respect of many people and helped to inspire a similar action by another soldier when we finally got to Basic Training at Ft. Benning.

My second big conflict occurred over the limited time allotted for eating. We are often given 5 minutes or less to consume our meals. I usually try to stay longer in order

GIs' Letters to Challenge

to finish my meal instead of jumping up after 5 minutes and leaving half of it uneaten. The first sergeant and the captain noticed this and started harassing me. I was singled out and given three minutes to eat. I was also given a written warning for eating too slow. When a sergeant told me to leave the dining facility after 3 minutes, I demanded to see the regulation that restricted eating time. He told me that if he ordered me to eat in 3 minutes, then I had to do so. After the meal, I talked to many of my fellow soldiers. They were all angry about the way I had been treated and the little time that all of us were give to eat. I publicly made it known that if I was singled out again, I would file harassment charges. Five soldiers agreed to sit with me and be witnesses. At the next meal, the harasment stopped. Evidently the brass decided to back off.

At one point, a group of soldiers who were angry at a particular corporal managed to organize a collective counterattack. Every time the corporal would pass, one of the soldiers would call out his name in a high-pitched, whiney voice. When the corporal demanded who did it, no one would admit to the act. Despite the fact that the corporal dropped the whole group for pushups several times, they continued. The corporal became infuriated and yelled threats at different members of the group. Having accomplished their goal of returning some of the harassment back to the source, they stopped.

The vast majority of people have joined for econoomic reasons. This is even true of most of the gung-ho aspiring "airborne ranger" types. There are many soldiers here that are open to the politics of InCAR and PLP. Recently, four of us started to meet regularly in a discussion group to talk about anti-racist and revolutionary politics. Here at the U.S. Army Infantry School, the seeds of revolution are being planted in fertile soil.

Comradely,
An Aspiring Red Infantry Soldier

Dear **Challenge:**

It is the last week of Basic Training for my platoon in Ft. Sill, Okla., and by now I have publicly declared my commitment to socialist revolution to the entire platoon. My fellow recruits now all know why the PLP organizes among soldiers – and it has paid off.

First, a handful of anti-communists, who are thoroughly disliked by the rest of the platoon, threatened to turn me in to the sergeant for being a Russian spy. I confronted them with their stupidity, and they backed down. Other soldiers also attacked them and defended the ideas of communism, and my right to be a communist. This little struggle was useful in that it showed our boldness in openly putting forward our ideas and fighting for them.

Now everyone in the platoon is asking me questions about communism, even the red-baiters. This is great because it gives me more opportunity to talk about the need to turn the bosses' wars into workers' revolution for socialism – a society of equality, free of racism, sexism, profits and nuclear wars. The distribution of ***C-D*** has increased to five more readers. One of these readers is particularly interested in keeping in touch with our Party once he leaves Basic. He grew up around the Klan in Florida and has a lot of hatred for them. He also has a deep hatred for the rich and the U.S. government because his father died of wounds inflicted in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War.

The Party has accomplished the following at Ft. Sill: a new InCAR member, 3 subs to ***C-D*** and a multi-racial contact list of soldiers interested in the ideas of socialist revolution. I guarantee that I will follow up on my buddies, because I don't want them to end up as cannon fodder for the bosses' wars.

Our Party has the only solution to the misery created by capitalism for the working class, and that's communism. The time is now to organize all working class soldiers to turn their guns around and fight for socialism.

Ft. Sill Comrade

The preparation of this pamphlet involved the collection of a large amount of data. While we have tried hard to avoid errors, some undoubtedly will have crept in. Furthermore, the division of the economy into groups changes slowly but steadily from year to year. As a result, the reader might find instances of links that no longer (possibly even never) existed, along with links which we do not mention. However, a small number of incorrect or outdated facts will not offset the overall outline of the interest groups and especially not the picture of a society dominated by finance capital.

Who Rules Britain?

Every time you pick up a newspaper or turn on the television there is news that someone has made some important decision. For example, *U.K. TO SPEND £5,000,000,000 ON TRIDENT MISSILES* or *25,000 CAR WORKERS TO BE SACKED* or *HOSPITAL TO SHUT DOWN* or *NATIONAL FRONT GRANTED MARCH PERMIT.* These decisions often involve huge sums of money and affect the well being of millions of people; sometimes they involve issues of life and death itself. Nevertheless, the people affected by these decisions—workers, students, soldiers, unemployed, hospital patients and so on—are seldom consulted, even though they may be very opposed.

People get "decided at" so often today, and with such disastrous consequences (disastrous for the "decidees") that many must be wondering who runs things: who is running the factory, the school or university, the union, the government? In short, **Who Rules Britain?** That is what this pamphlet is about.

The question is obviously very important, and we are not the only people to have ideas on the subject. If you look in the pages of any political newspaper or listen to any politician, or take a social science course, you will hear many opinions on the question. The Open University, for example, even has an entire course on "Decision Making In Britain" involving dozens of hours of television time and hundreds of pages of notes and reading. It would seem to be an extremely complex question.

The Open University course conveniently summarizes five "models" of decision making in Britain which are fairly representative of "mainstream" sociological ideas. These models include:

Behind the facade of "democracy" the real rulers of Britain are the finance capitalists—the masters of the big banks. Only socialist revolution, not reform, will put political power in the hands of workers in Britain and everywhere.

● **The Ruling Class Model:** All power in society, both public (the government) and private (business) is monopolized by a capitalist ruling class. This is what Marx and Lenin believed.

● **The Ruling Elite Model:** All power is concentrated in the hands of a ruling elite. This is the view put forward by an American sociologist, C. Wright Mills, in his book *The Power Elite*. The theory is a clever modification of Marx's view because the "elitists" are not necessarily capitalists. Mills borrowed many of his ideas from 19th century anti-Marxist academics and politicians; most notably from Max Weber, a German militarist and contributor to the ill-fated Weimar Constitution.

● **The Pluralist Model:** Power is fragmented between a number of contending groups such as politicians, trade unions, professionals, church groups, and businessmen. This theory is very prominent in educational circles.

Which of models applies to Britain? The course materials avoid answering the question. This supposedly allows each student to make up his or her mind, although the authors of the course openly confess that they chose not to examine any evidence in favor of the ruling class model. In one of the summaries the authors offer the opinion that different models are valid in different "contexts." This seems to be a hyperpluralist approach. Students in the course may learn some interesting ideas and facts, but the answer to the question **Who Rules Britain?** will certainly not be found.

The Open University's list of models in fact omits the two most prevalent views on the nature of power in society. These views we call the "Three Centres" theory and the "Labourist" theory.

The "Three Centres" theory is a version of the pluralist theory in which power is supposedly divided between the "big three", namely Government, Business and Trades Unions. This is the point of view of most "liberal" or "middle of the road" politicians and journalists (at one point the Open University Course notes propose it as a "hypothesis.").

The "Labourist" theory is a reformist adaptation of the Marxist-Leninist or revolutionary communist view. According to this theory, power in society is shared and disputed by two opposing forces, those of the Right (the Tory Party, the City, the private sector, most "press lords", multinationals, etc.), and those of the Left (the trades unions, the Labour Party, the public sector, community organizers, etc.). This is the viewpoint of almost the entire organised left in Britain including the Communist Party and the various Trotskyist organizations. The theory appears to be Marxist because the struggle between Right and Left is supposedly a class struggle between capitalists and workers. However, it disagrees with the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary communist outlook on questions of the government (the state). Marx and Lenin always emphasised the fact that in a capitalist society the government is

controlled by the capitalist class. According to the Labourist theory, however, the "progressive forces" can wrest control of parts of the state through elections and other peaceful activities.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to show that the Marxist-Leninist or revolutionary communist theory, and not the Labourist or any other view, applies to Britain today.

A QUESTION OF LIFE & DEATH

In using the word "model" the OU (and capitalist sociology in general) make the whole question seem academic as if we were studying some obscure form of plant life or a distant galaxy. In reality, the question "who rules Britain" is one of the most important you can ask, and understanding the true nature of power in society could mean literally the difference between life and death for millions of people.

It is obvious to anyone with eyes or ears that capitalist Britain (and capitalism in general) is developing in a direction which is very dangerous, at least for ordinary people. Inflation is quickly eating away at our standard of living, racism and fascist organizations are on the rise, unemployment is over two million, and the big powers are openly preparing for military confrontation (witness the Autumn 80 Nato and Warsaw pact manoeuvers).

Most workers and students have no intention of just sitting back and letting themselves be sacked, attacked by fascists, or killed in another bosses' war. However, in order to take political action it is absolutely necessary to have some understanding of society, in order to sort out friends from enemies and come up with a strategy. For example, there are many people in Britain (starting with Callaghan) who call themselves socialist. Do they mean it? It's hard to take Callaghan seriously, but Benn seems more convincing. If they aren't socialists, then what forces do they really represent? These are not easy questions.

The best way to understand the difference between these 'models' of society is to think what they mean in terms of political action.

If the elite model is true, for example, then there isn't really much we can do except trust the experts and hope for the best.

If the pluralist model is correct then all we can do is pursue the narrow interests of our 'own' contending group (eg. a Trade Union).

If the three centres theory is true all we can do is hope the unions can have their say.

If the Labourist theory is true we have to support the Labour Party.

Finally, if the Marxist theory is true we have to make a revolution.

In other words, the non-Marxist theories tell us to either do nothing or support some group (union leaders, politicians) which (as we will see) are in reality loyal to capitalism.

If we follow the non-Marxist theories we will support capitalists and some form of capitalism. If we follow the Marxist theory, we can destroy it.

WHO RULES BRITISH INDUSTRY

One feature common to all of the non-Marxist "models" is their treatment of societies and individuals in the abstract and their attempt to deal with the question of power while avoiding unpleasant subjects like "capitalism" and "profit." In reality, Britain is a capitalist society and the great majority of the working population is employed by organisations whose goal is the maximisation of profit. It was once said that "The business of America is business" but the remark applies also to Britain, France, Japan, and the Soviet Union. If we want to know who rules Britain, we must first discover who rules British industry.

The outstanding feature of British industry is concentration. The top 100 companies account for nearly half of the total turnover, with the largest (British Petroleum) having a turnover more than the total of the next three. By some measures business in Britain is more concentrated than in any other European country. Some of the biggest firms, such as Courtaulds, have taken over literally hundreds of smaller companies in the last 20 years. Many branches of industry such as steel, automobiles and shipbuilding are now dominated by a single nationalized producer.

Nevertheless, even with this high degree of concentration there are still hundreds of apparently independent firms. This suggests a pluralist interpretation of power in society—is power not fragmented among the owners of these firms? The pluralist view is based on an important assumption, namely that firms related by ownership have very little to do with each other. This assumption ignores the possibility that one firm can control another without necessarily owning it outright. What we need to know is who **controls** industry.

Modern sociologists have produced several theories about power in the modern corporation. Some claim that the managers have taken power (the "managerial revolution") while others say that widespread stock ownership has produced a sort of "people's capitalism."

These theories are ingenious, but they ignore one of the basic laws of capitalism: he who pays the piper calls the tune. Shareholders by law own a company because they own the capital which is being employed. In reality, stock sales and profits do not always generate enough money to keep a firm competitive, and the firms are then forced to borrow from one of the banks. The result is that the banks now own a "share" of the capital that the firm is using; not surprisingly the banks demand a share in the running of the company. This power sharing with the banks usually involves some stock ownership together with the placing of

representatives of the banks on the Board of Directors of the firm. As different firms fall under the sway of different banks, the economy as a whole divides up into a number of competing (and cooperating) interest groups, each centred around a bank or group of banks. It is important to realise that the bankers usually do not own outright the companies they control—the banks avoid tying up valuable capital in unnecessary share ownership. **Control** becomes separated from formal legal **ownership**.

The enormous power of the banks was described recently in, of all places, a best selling Canadian paperback. The book, **The Canadian Establishment**, by Peter C. Newman, a leading journalist, is an "in depth" exposé of Canada's leading businessmen. The book as a whole presents a distorted picture of Canadian capitalism because it basically ignores the British and U.S. finance capitalists who actually run Canada. Newman, at least, understands the role of the banks.

> It is the banks that run the private intelligence network that allows the men at the command posts of Canadian Business to keep in touch. The executive board meetings of the five largest banks represent the greatest source of non-governmental power in the country. During these deliberations are formed, strengthened, and multiplied the kinships through which the Canadian Establishment protects its existence and swells its authority. The corporations represented on each bank's board of directors trace the bloodlines of big business power in Canada. The clusters formed by this interlacing of friendships, shared concerns, open doors and common policies decide who gets what portion of the $40 billion in loans that the banks have outstanding at any one time. The bankers' omnipotence is exercised through their ability to withhold favours, to keep the interlopers they consider unsuitable from joining not only their own clusters of influence but any other clusters as well. This veto-power constitutes the chief element of the bankers might.
>
> —Peter C. Newman
> *The Canadian Establishment"*
> (Seal Books, Bantam 1979) p. 96.

The importance of the banks was not discovered by a Canadian paperback journalist. Their role was first set forth clearly by Lenin, in **Imperialism—the Highest Stage of Capitalism**, published in 1916. To many people the word "imperialism" is a sort of curse word referring only to the striving of one country to dominate another. But for Lenin and communists since him it refers to a form of society, like feudalism or slavery. Imperialism is, roughly speaking, the stage of capitalism in which monopolies dominate the national economy, tighten their grip over the government, and in which capitalist competition takes the form of international military and economic struggles between the biggest capitalist powers, culminating inevitably in ever more destructive world wars based on the needs of each capitalist power for constant expansion.

Lenin laid special emphasis on the role of the banks which ascend to the command posts of society as intensified competition between capitalist firms necessitates the concentration and centralization of industry as well as the ideological and repressive functions of the state. Modern history degenerates into a succession of periodic wars and spawns fascist regimes first in one part of the world, then in another, as ruling classes find it more difficult to maintain their rule within capitalist "democracies."

Since Lenin's time, several communist writers, especially in the U.S., have been able to extend and refine the analysis of finance capitalism and the domination of leading banking groups over society. The best example of this work was Victor Perlo's **Empire of High Finance**. However, shortly after World War II the situation changed. The Communist Party of the USA, along with Communist Partys everywhere, abandoned socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat as their goal and instead began to adopt strategies of supporting one group of capitalists against another. In order to justify this change in strategy, Perlo quickly produced a new book, **Militarism in Industry**, in which he repudiated the theory of bank control and claimed instead that the economy was divided into "hawks" and "doves". The "hawks" were expansionists and militarists while the "doves" were capitalists opposed to war and racism. In general fake socialists ("revisionists"), have no use for the bank control theory because it would expose their strategies as incorrect. The reality of bank control does not fit a theory that supports "lesser evils" and fosters illusions about the commitment of the ruling class to democracy. In Perlo's case, for

Lenin laid special emphasis on the role of the banks as the command posts of capitalist society.

example, his early work demonstrated quite clearly that the Rockefeller and Morgan empires controlled both the "dovish" firms and those which he later decided were "hawkish."

At the same time that the international communist movement was disintegrating (the late 1940s and early 1950s) ruling class social scientists began developing some of the alternative models of power described above. Most of these social scientists were funded by ruling class think tanks, some of which are described below. In the early 1970s, the Progressive Labor Party (whose founders left the CPUSA in the late '50s) published a detailed study called **Who Rules America?**, an updated presentation of the Marxist-Leninist approach which documented the continued domination of the Rockefeller and Morgan groups. At the same time a handful of social scientists have pursued the theory. Recently a book by David M. Kotz entitled **Bank Control of Large Corporations in the U.S.A.**, presented new evidence supporting the bank control theory and, as it happens, the PLP pamphlet. Kotz is very cautious and academic, but his solid case was bolstered by his access to new information on stock ownership.

As far as we can tell, the bank control theory has never been systematically applied to Britain, although occasionally a Labour Party "theorist" will produce some evidence on the interlocks between banks and industry. Two examples are Hugh Thomas, **The Establishment** (Anthony Blond, 1959) and articles by Michael Barratt-Brown in Ken Coates(ed.) **Can the Workers Run Industry?** (Spokesman Books, 1968). Undoubtedly the influence of the Labour Party and the "Labourist" theory has played an important part in discouraging a systematic investigation of power in Britain.

All studies of finance capitalism in the U.S.A. agree that the U.S. economy is dominated by two groups founded in the early part of this century by John D. Rockefeller and J.P. Morgan respectively. Lenin mentioned these two in **Imperialism**, and the two groups remain in control today although their relative strength has changed. There are other interest groups, but none of them has the financial or political muscle possessed by the big two. Rockefeller and Morgan groups control five of the Big 6 New York banks and with them much of the rest of U.S. industry. When rivals appear on the scene they are quickly disciplined, either by political or economic means.

The largest U.S. group is led by the Rockefeller family and centred around the Chase Manhattan Bank. Citibank (First National City), and the Chemical Bank. Other families and financiers (such as C. Douglas Dillon) also have a say. The number two group is centred around the Morgan Guaranty Trust and Bankers Trust. J.P. Morgan was the founder, but his descendants play only a secondary role today; other families, such as the Harrimans, have come to the fore. The Morgan group used to be the top dog, but lost out in the 1930s and '40s, partly because the Rockefellers placed their man Roosevelt in the white house and used government projects like the Tennessee Valley Authority to attack Morgan interests. The two groups still compete somewhat, but now mainly prefer to unite against smaller groups, especially western and southern interests which backed Nixon.

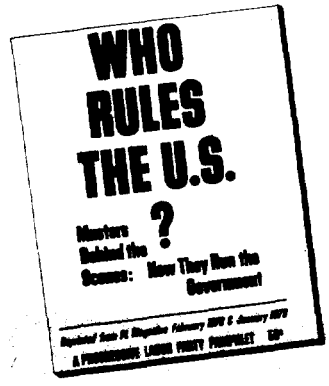
In addition, there are a number of firms such as General Motors (Vauxhall in the U.K.) and IBM over which the two groups exersize joint control. There are also several much smaller groups and also a few "family" firms which have so far managed to avoid falling under direct sway of the banks. All these connections can be deduced from studying the patterns of interlocking directorships.

U.K. BANKS: THE FOUR BIG GROUPS

An analysis of the interest groups in the U.K. economy begins, of course, with the centres of finance. The entire pattern of interlock, alliance and rivalry is quite complex, but the overall picture is actually quite simple and indeed familiar to anyone who strolls down a High Street.

The following list includes some of the largest and best known corporations controlled by the Morgan and Rockefeller groups:

Rockefeller
Metropolitan Life
International Telephone & Telegraph
Pan American World Airways
Standard Oil-Exxon/Esso
Texaco
U.S. Steel
Monsanto
CBS
McDonnell Douglas
Time Inc.



Morgan
Mutual of N.Y.
International Nickel
Trans/World Airlines
Campbell Soup
Philip Morris
Ford Motor Co.
General Electric
Boeing
Babcock and Wilcox
Rexall Drugs
N.Y. Times

THE BANKS AT THE CENTRES OF THE INTEREST GROUPS

BARCLAYS GROUP

Barclays — Barclays Bank Int'l
Hambros — Bank of Scotland
Kleinwort Benson — Tonsdale

NATWEST GROUP

Natwest — Coutts
County
International Westminster

LLOYDS GROUP

Lloyds — Grindlays
Lloyds Bank Int'l — Williams & Glys
Hill Samuel — JHS Wagg

MIDLAND GROUP

Midland
Samuel Montagu
Clydesdale

MAIN INDEPENDANTS

Lazards — SG Warburg
Rothschilds — Morgan Grenfell

There are four big groups centred around the four High Street banks: The Barclays, Lloyds, Midlands and National Westminster groups, in order of size of the groups as a whole, but not necessarily the size of the banks themselves. Sometimes, as Marx said, things are as they seem. There are also a few smaller groups not directly connected with the big four, but in order to survive they are usually forced to ally with one of the big four. There is even a noticeable tendency for the smaller of the big four to ally with the larger: the Midland Bank frequently cooperates with Lloyds, while NatWest sometimes joins forces with Barclays.

Of course there are many other power banking and financial organisations, particularly the merchant banks but most are connected or allied with one of the big four. The simplest connection to trace is direct ownership, and each has several important subsidiaries. In summary,

Direct ownership, however, accounts for only two of the merchant banks. The picture becomes clearer when we examine connections not based on ownership. The most famous recent director of Barclays Bank (until he became the Foreign Secretary) has been Lord Carrington, who was also a director of Hambros. Another prominent director of Barclays Bank (International) is Harry Oppenheimer, the Rockefeller of South Africa; his father Earnest was a director of both Barclays and Hambros. H.W. Astor is a director of Hambros and past Astors have been directors of Barclays. At present, S. Spiro is a director of both banks.

A realisation of just how important and decisive these connections are comes from the fact that there are no interlocks between the big four banks and also no interlocks between Barclays and any of the banks associated with the other three. Other evidence could also be brought forward: J. Hambro, for example, sits on the board of Oppenheimer's Charter Consolidated Mining Company. We believe that there is sufficient evidence to conclude that Barclays and Hambros are allies. It is hard to say, on the basis of director interlocks, what exactly is involved in this alliance, but it is unlikely that one partner dominates the other. It is plausible to assume that at some point the families which dominate the two banks decided it would be in their mutual interest to collaborate against competitors. This was a smart move, because Barclays and Hambros are probably the two most powerful banks and they seem to have gained the upper hand in the strategic direction of British imperialism.

The same pattern, a Clearing bank cooperating with a Merchant bank, appears when we examine Lloyds. One of the directors of Lloyds Bank is Viscount Bearstead; his "real" name is Marcus

SOME OF THE MAJOR CORPORATIONS IN THE FOUR INTEREST GROUPS

LLOYDS

BP
GEC
Courtaulds
Rolls Royce Vickers
Legal & General Assurance
Sears Holdings

MIDLAND

BAT Industries — Gloxo
BICC — Allied Breweries (with Lloyds)
Reed International — Shell (with Lloyds)

NATWEST

Tube Investments — John Brown
Blue Circle Cement (with Barclays) — Prudential Insurance
English China Clays (with Barclays) — WH Smith & Sons

BARCLAYS

RTZ
Cadbury Shweppes
Anglo American
Royal Insurance
Trabalgar House
Booker McConnell

Samuel, and he is the leading member of the Samuel family which controls, through directorships and stock ownership, the powerful Hill Samuel Merchant Bank. Moreover, Hill Samuel is interlocked with William and Glyns which is in turn interlocked with Lloyds through the Kenyon family; these three seem to cooperate in much the same way as Barclays and Hambros, although perhaps not quite so closely.

This accounts for three of the five larger merchant banks. What of the remaining two, namely Kleinwort Benson and JH Shroeder Wagg? Evidence points to an alliance between Kleinwort Benson and the Barclays group, while Shroeder Wagg works with Lloyds. Sir Charles Ball, former vice-chairman of Kleinwort Benson, joined Barclays as a director for a while in the late '70s, and Martin Jacomb, another Kleinwort Benson vice-chairman, is a director of Barclays' Mercentile Credit. Furthermore, Kleinwort Benson has representatives on the boards of Rio Tinto Zinc and Cadbury-Schweppes, both of which are linked with Barclays and Hambros. Our suspicion of a link between the two was confirmed in a recent **Observer** business article which reported that Tuke, Barclays chairman, was considering merging Barclays' Unicorn Trust in Kleinwort's M&G trusts. According to the **Observer**, relations between the two are very close.

What of the remaining merchant bank, JH Shroeder Wagg? Gordon Richardson, chairman of Shroeder Wagg from 1962-72, was also vice-chairman of Lloyds until 1966. During that time another prominent director, Charles Villiers, sat on the board of Courtaulds when Hill Samuel's Kearton was the chairman. We will include Shroeder Wagg in the Lloyds group, although it is possible that the situation has changed; currently a director of Shroeder Wagg sits on the board of two companies associated with Midland Bank. For our purposes, the exact classificaton of Shroeder Wagg is not of vital importance because 1) The bank no longer has many interlocks with other companies and 2) Lloyds and Midland cooperate anyway and 3) We are interested only in the broad picture.

There are still several important banks not accounted for, including Lazards, SG Warburg, and NM Rothschild and Son. The general pattern seems to be that each cooperates here with Barclays, there with Lloyds or with another of the big four. For example, Lord Soames was a director of NatWest and is a Rothschild partner, while P. Shelbourne is a Midland director and a Rothschild partner. The Rothschilds also participate in Barclays' Rio Tinto Zinc. These comings and goings do not really affect the overall picture because none of these banks is powerful enough independently to control a large number of firms.

Finally, there is one important international connection that should not be overlooked: Lloyds Bank interlocks with Citibank (Rockefeller). Furthermore, a Lloyds director is a member of the Rockefeller Foundation and Citibank owns 40% of Grindlays. Again, it is only natural that the underdog should seek outside help, in this case from the dominant American group.

Once the largest banks have been assigned to the appropriate interest group it is a relatively simple matter to examine the boards of the largest firms and locate interlocks with the big four banking groups. Almost all of the top 50 firms, for example, have at least one boardroom representative from a bank; often there are two, three or even more. There are a few firms in the top 50 which do not have bankers on their board, but it should be kept in mind that

1) Some of these (like Ford U.K.) are British branches of foreign firms which are controlled by foreign interest groups. Ford, for example, is run by the Morgan group.
2) Some directors are former bankers. Both the present and previous directors of BL were bankers; in fact the press continues to refer to Villiers and MacGregor as "merchant bankers." It is almost certain that this type of director is still representing a specific interest group, even though he has temporarily given up formal membership in the group. The same point applies, of course, to bankers who resign their posts when they serve the ruling class as government officials or politicians.
3) Bankers give personal attention to only the most important firms, and high turnover is not necessarily the same thing as importance.

RIVALRY AMONG THE BANKS

Although each of the interests groups has influence in all branches of the economy, the distribution is not exactly equal. In particular, the Barclays group is strong in insurance, property, mining and shipping, whereas the Lloyds group is powerfully entrenched in the engineering industries (GEC, BL, Lucas, etc.), and the Lloyds-Midlands alliance dominates oil (Shell and BP). All of the groups are heavily involved in overseas activity (ie. imperialism), but in different ways: Barclays in Africa, Lloyds in South America (Lloyds Bank International used to be the Bank of London and South America). In South Africa itself Barclays and the Oppenheimer family dominate mining (Anglo-American, deBeers) and much of the rest of the economy. Barclays is the biggest bank in South Africa. However, the profits of racism and apartheid are too high not to attract the other financial groups, who are just as greedy but not quite as successful as the Barclays gang. Lloyds and Midlands control (or used to control, see below) Consolidated Goldfields, Oppenheimer's main gold mining rival. Also Tiny Rowland's Lonrho (which appears to be indirectly linked with Lloyds) is heavily involved in Zimbabwe. Although the spokesmen for these groups

all claim to "detest" apartheid, the different banks are directly involved in defending the racist regime (see, for example, the CIS Report **Banking in South Africa**) with Barclays and Standard Chartered taking the lead.

One part of industry that gets special attention from the chiefs of finance capital is the press. Fleet Street is the playground of the capitalist press lords themselves (Murdoch, Thomson, etc.). They are not themselves bankers, but they wheel and deal under the watchful eyes of the leading members of the ruling class. Here are the banking connections of the main newspapers, except for the **Telegraph**, for which information was not available, and the **Observer**, owned by American interests.

The Daily Mirror—owned by Reed International, whose chairman is Alex Smith of Midland.
The Daily Express—owned by Trafalgar House, which is linked with Kleinwort Benson (Barclays)
The Sun—owned by News International, Ltd., linked with Morgan Grenfell.
The Daily Mail—owned by Daily Mail and General Trust, on whose board sit D.J. Robarts, formerly of Natwest, and Lord Cromer, formerly of the Bank of England, member of the Baring family, and one of the leaders of the ruling class.
The Economist—owned by S. Pearson & Son, part of a group of companies centred on Lazards bank.
The Guardian—owned by Guardian and Manchester Evening News, on whose board sits J.M. Clay of Hambros and the Bank of England.
The Times—owned by the Thomson organisation. On the board of Times Newspapers we find:

Lord Robens	Bank of England
Lord Roll	S.G. Warburg
Sir Kenneth Keith	Hill Samuel
Lord Greene	Bank of England

It should be obvious that capitalism's biggest bosses are not just in it for the money (the Times supposedly operates at a loss.) They realize that close control of the media is extremely important in maintaining the rule of their class. The situation for television is similar—Lord Harlech, for example, has his own television company. The bankers are very careful to ensure their monopoly of, to use Marx's phrase, the means of "mental production."

There are a number of firms which seem to be shared by several groups of banks, the most prominent of which are ICI and Sun Alliance and London. The natural question is: if these banks can cooperate in running two giant companies over a long period of time, why cannot they cooperate in running the economy as a whole? The answer is, of course, that to a large extent they do, partly because they have been forced to work together because of competition from imperialist rivals. At present the British ruling class cannot afford the luxury of competing in railways, steel, automobiles or chemicals. On the other hand, no capitalist ever gives up the dream of being the "top dog." The Lloyds group is forced to cooperate with Barclays but they would rather be number one; the Barclays group is determined to maintain its position and even weaken the competition further still. Every now and then the two giants clash more or less openly, and the financial pages (and sometimes even the front pages) of the national newspapers are filled with the reports of some especially hard fought takeover bid or some controversial government measure.

The rivalry between Barclays and Lloyds empires seems to explain, for example, some recent mysterious financial manoeuvers involving the

Anti-apartheid protestor is removed after protest at Barclays Bank, a leading banking partner of South Africa.

Consolidated Gold Fields mining company mentioned earlier. Towards the end of 1979 the directors of CGF gradually became aware that some unknown power was buying up shares in the company. This kind of "raiding" is always considered "unethical" and "dishonest" by the victims of the raiders. Alarm and indignation spread in the city until one morning Consolidated's Chairman received a telephone communication from the mysterious buyer, who turned out to be none other than Barclays' own Harry Oppenheimer. Since Consolidated is (or was) controlled by the Lloyds/Midlands axis, the Barclays crowd was obviously trying to tear off a piece of their rival's empire and monopolize gold mining in South Africa. Oppenheimer, however, had managed to gather only about a quarter of Consolidated shares and business commentators predicted he would have a tough fight to get his representatives placed on the Consolidated board.

A few months later, Lloyds retaliated: their BP oil company made a takeover bid for Selection Trust (ST) mining company which was closely tied (by shares ownerships and director interlock) to Oppenheimer's Anglo-American Corporation. What was especially unusual about this takeover bid (apart from its size—it was the largest in U.K. history) was the fact that it was made by a partly government-owned company at a time when the government was trying to reduce the size of the public sector! Of course, in reality there is nothing strange about the Lloyds group wanting to expand a public company which they control at the expense of a private company controlled by their competitors.

Actually, the situation is more complicated because BP will not be able to take over ST unless Oppenheimer agrees. Apparently a settlement has already been reached in which BP will get ST but Oppenheimer will acquire Consolidated in return. Oppenheimer now has his men on the Consolidated Board (that is what the arrangement was about) and it remains to be seen whether Oppenheimer will fulfill his part of the bargain. Either way Oppenheimer appears to come out ahead and the Barclays group strengthens its domination of South Africa. (Recent development: The deal has in fact gone through; BP and the Lloyds group increase their mining interests in return for Oppenheimer gaining access to North Sea Oil.)

Incidentally, it might also seem ironic that a public company such as BP should have millions of pounds to spend during a period of "belt-tightening." In fact BP, which is highly profitable, had a "cash mountain" and was looking for something to spend it on. Now they **could** have spent it building houses in Britain (or South Africa), and maybe even made a profit at it. But housing is nowhere near as profitable as goldmining, especially given the nearly slave-labor conditions in South African mines. The Lloyds group is forced to maximise their profits if they do not want to fall even further behind Barclays. Racism, in particular, is highly profitable, and the biggest finance capitalists are also the biggest racists.

Many readers probably think we have made a mistake in identifying only four major power centers in Britain. So far we have left out a fifth and very large group of firms, namely the nationalised industries. It should be clear by now, however, that no mistake was made. If directory interlocks are examined, we must conclude that the bankers control the nationalized industries. This was made very clear recently when Keith Joseph, Secretary of State for Industry, appointed, at great expense, the banker Ian MacGregor as Chairman of the British Steel Corporation. In fact the bankers have always played an important role in running the nationalized industries, regardless of which party has been in office. MacGregor, for example, became the Deputy Chairman of British Leyland during a Labour government.

Furthermore, it is not even true that the bankers have "wormed their way in" to the nationalised industries and have somehow managed to subvert the intentons of the original nationalisers. The founders of the industries were or became bankers. Lord Melchett, first Chairman of the BSC, was a member of M. Samuel which later became Hill Samuel; Lord Beeching, first Chairman of British Railways and notorious for reducing services, joined Lloyds Bank; Lord Robens, the first National Coal Board Chairman, joined the Bank of England and then became chairman of Lloyds-dominated Vickers. The so-called "socialist" or "public sector" encroaching on the greedy capitalist "private sector" is one of British imperialism's biggest and most successful myths.

THE GOVERNMENT: OWNED BY THE BANKS

It must be admitted that we cannot really justify assigning public sector companies to interest groups solely on the basis of directory interlocks: The public sector companies are different from private companies because they are owned and receive their financing from the government and the directors, even if they are bankers, are appointed by the government. It could even be argued that the bankers on the boards of the nationalised industries are not representing interest groups at all; they could simply be generously devoting their time to government in order to provide financial expertise. There is only one problem with this theory: the finance capitalists run the government itself.

According to the law, it would be impossible for bankers to run the government. After all, Parliament is the supreme power in the land and all decisions are made by a majority vote of the elected representatives of the people. In reality,however,

100 MAJOR CORPORATIONS AND THEIR CONTROLLING INTEREST GROUPS
(B: Barclays, L: Lloyds, M: Midland, N: Natwest)

Abbey National Building Society	B-L
Acrow	B
Agricultural Mortgage	B-L
Allied Breweries	M-L
Anglo American	B
Australia and New Zealand Banking Group	B-N-M
BAT Industries	M
BICC	M
BL	L
BNOC	L-M
BP	L
Bass Charrington	L-M
Beecham Group	L
deBeers	B
Blue Circle Industries	B-N
Booker McConnell	B
Boots	L
British Aerospace	L
British Airways	B
British Electric Tractron	L-M
British Home Stores	M
British Steel	L-B
British Sugar	M
Cavenham	B
Cadbury Schweppes	B
Charter Consolidated	B
City and Commercial Investment Trust	M
City and International Trust	L
Commercial Development Finance Company	B
Commercial Union Insurance	B-L-M-N
Consolidated Gold Fields	L-M
Courtaulds	L
Daily Mail & General Trust	N
Delta Metal	L-M-N
Dunlop Holdings	M-N
Eagle Star Insurance	L-M
English China Clays	B-N
Finance for Industry	B-N
First National Finance Corporation	L-B
Fisons	B
Furness, Withy	B-L
General Accident, Fire and Life	M-L-N
General Electric Corporation	L
Glaxo Holdings	M
Guardian and Manchester Evening News	B
Guardian Royal Exchange Assurance	M-B-N
Guest, Keen and Nettlefolds	B
Hawker Siddeley	L
Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation	B-N
ICI	B-L-M
IMI	L
Imperial Group	N-M
Industrial and Commercial Finance Corp.	L-M
John Brown	N
Johnson & Firth Brown	B
Legal and General Assurance	L
Lucas	L
I Lyons	M
Massey Ferguson	L
Mercantile Credit	B
M&G Group	B
Morgan Crucible	B
National Nuclear Corp.	L
Norwich Union Life Assurance	B
Ocean T&T	L
P&O	B
Peachy Property	B
Phoenix Assurance	B-N-L
Pilkington Bros	B
Plessey	B
Prudential Assurance	N
Rank Hovis McDougall	B
Rank Organisation	M
Reed International	M
Rio Tinto Zinc	B
Rolls Royce	L-B
Rothman International	M
Rowntree Mackintosh	M-L
Royal Insurance	B-L
Sears Holdings	L
Shell T&T	M-L
Slough Estates	B
WH Smith & Sons	N
Smith Industries	B
Standard Telephone& Cables	L
Sun Alliance & London Life	L-B-N
Taylor Woodrow	B
Thomas Tilling	B
Thomas Tilling	L-B
Thorn Electrical	B
Tozer Kemeley & Millbourn	B
Trafalgar House	B
Tube Investments	N
Unigate	L
United Biscuits	B
Union Discount	L-B
Union Miniere	B
Vickers	L
Wedgewood	B
Weir Group	B
Whilbread Investment Trust	B-L

Based on Directory of Directors 1978, 1979, 1980 and Stock Exchange Year Book 1978-9, 1979-80.

MAJOR BANKS REPRESENTED ON THE BOARDS OF THE TOP 50 BRITISH FIRMS

BP
Lloyds, S.G. Warburg, Bank of England, National Bank of New Zealand

ICI Lloyds, Midland, Barclays, Kleinwort Benson Lonsdale

Electricity Council
HILL Samuel (CEGB)

BAT Industries
Midland, S.G. Warburg

Imperial Group Lazards

BSC

National Coal Board

BL Hill Samuel

General Electric Company
Bank of England, Lloyds, Morgan Grenfell, Hill Samuel

Ford Motor Company

Esso Petroleum
Williams & Glyns

Associated British Foods

GKN
Barclays, Morgan Grenfell

Courtauld
Hill Samuel

Reed International
Midland

Gallaher

Dunlop Holdings
Midland

Texaco

Tate and Lyle S.G. Warburg

Lonrho

Rank Hovis McDougall
Barclays

Allied Breweries
Midland, Bank of England

Thorn Electrical Hill Samuel

BICC
Midland, Bank of England

Unigate Lloyds, Natwest

Rank Xerox

Consolidated Gold Fields
Midland, Standard Chartered

Hawker Siddeley
Lloyds, S.G. Warburg, Barclays

Baso Charrington
Grindlays, J.H.S. Wagg

Lucas Industries
Lloyds

Cadbury Schweppes
Barclays, Kleinwort Benson, Lonsdale

Beecham Group Hill Samuel

British Aircraft Corporation

Burmah Oil

EMI Lazards

Thomas Tilling
Lloyds, Barclays

Tube Investments
Natwest, Hill Samuel

J. Lyons Natwest, Midland

Brook Bond Liebig

Geo. Wimpey

Spillers

Imperial Foods

Metal Box

Rolls Royce
Hill Samuel, Barclays

BOC International Lazards

Tarmac

Sources: The Top 5000 European Companies 1979, Stock Exchange Year Book, 1979-80.

the average backbench member at Westminster hardly ever participates in decisionmaking, no matter how loyal he or she may be to the capitalist system. Whenever any important question is put to Parliament, the MPs are forced to vote on Party lines so that if one Party has a majority the vote is almost always a pure formality. From time to time the Labour "left" rebels (or sometimes the Tory "right"), but it never breaks discipline when the votes may make a significant difference and could bring down the government.

The real decision makers at Westminster are senior members of the Cabinet, which is the "board of directors" of the government. These are appointed by the Prime Minister and do not even have to be members of Parliament. Under conservative governments the cabinet is studded with representatives of the largest businesses in the country, and many ministers are either representatives of, or closely associated with, the financial interest groups. The present (Thatcher) cabinet includes:

Margaret Thatcher: Her husband Denis was a director of Burmah Oil, the one oil company which was controlled by the Barclays group.

Lord Carrington: Foreign Secretary, former director of Barclays Bank and Barclays Bank International, Rio Tinto Zinc, Hambros, etc.

Sir Keith Joseph: Industry Secretary, formerly a director of Bovis, the family firm now a subsidiary of the Barclays-associated Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company (P&O).

James Prior: Employment Secetary, director of Barclays-controlled United Biscuits and Norich Union Insurance.

Geoffrey Howe: Chancellor, director of Sun Alliance and London Life (shared by Barclays, NatWest and Lloyds) and EMI, previously linked with Lloyds-controlled companies but recently taken over by Barclays-controlled Thorn.

In reviewing the business connections of the cabinet ministers it is clear that the Barclays Group predominates. In fact, if the Cabinet were the board of a private firm (HMS Government, Ltd.) we would classify the company as being linked with the Barclays group.

Previous Tory cabinets have been linked just as closely with the banks in general, although not so closely with the Barclays crowd in particular. Edward Heath's Chancellor, for example, was Lord Barber of the Standard Chartered Bank.

The links between the Cabinet and the banking groups are definitely important, but direct cabinet membership is only one way in which finance capitalists exercise control over the government. Cabinet Ministers, after all, are still public figures and the bankers generally prefer to act quietly behind the scenes. Moreover, the Labour Party, in order to preserve its socialist image, cannot afford to appoint the chiefs of finance capitalism to cabinet positions, and must rely instead on politicians such as Callaghan, Healey and Benn who are just very loyal to the system. Even during a Conservative government, the bankers and businessmen who join the Cabinet are not necessarily those wielding the most power. Some bankers, such as Lord Carrington, seem to enjoy the limelight while most powerful figures like the Bevans, Peases and Tukes prefer to remain relatively anonymous outside their opulent social and financial circles.

The bankers and their representatives who actually direct the government are not, for the most part, public figures like Lord Carrington, and on the whole do not work through Parliament, the Cabinet or even the House of Lords. They are found instead on the most important of the hundreds of governmental and quasi-governmental boards, committees and commissions in which decisions are actually reached. The boards of the public sector industries were mentioned above; here are some of the more important councils and commissions together with banker members:

Atomic Energy Authority	Lord Kearton, Hill Samuel
BBC	E.P. Chappell, Morgan Grenfell
British Railways Board	Lord Caldecote, Lloyds
British Tourist Authority	Sir H. Marking, Barclays
Commercial Development Corp.	J.M. Clay, Hambros
Duchy of Cornwall	J. Baring, Baring Bros.
Independent Broadcasting Authority	Lady Plowden, husband with NatWest
Ports Council	Sir D. Pettit, Lloyds
Police Complaints Board	Lord Plowden, NatWest
Privy Council	Lord Soames, Rothschilds
National Theatre Board	Lady Plowden, NatWest
British Overseas Trade Board	Sir B. Heath, Barclays
Corp. of Trinity House	Sir E. Drake, Kleinwort Benson
University Grants Committee	D. Barron, Lloyds

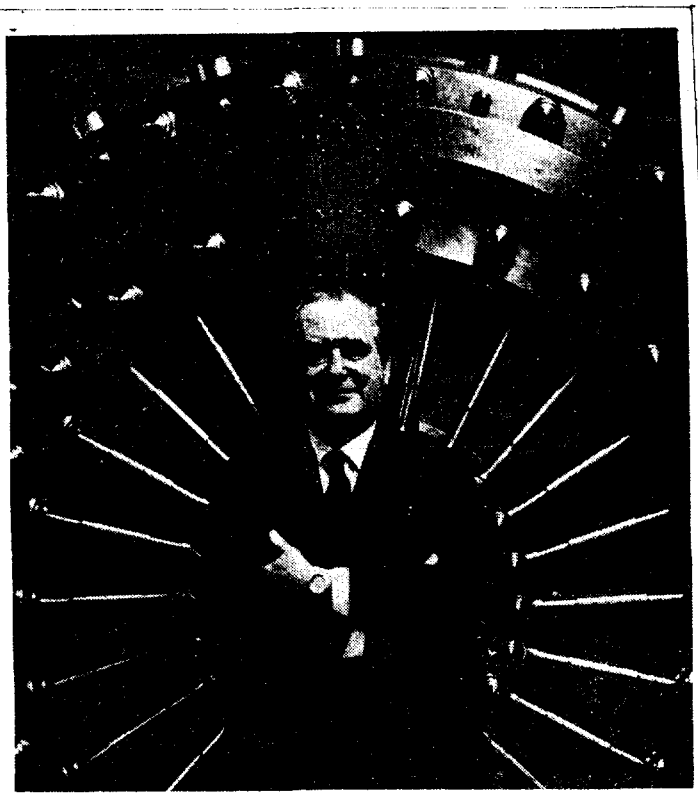
The bankers pay special attention to the universities. Even though they are run by the government anyway, almost every university has at least one of the big finance capitalists on its council. Anthony Tuhe himself, the chairman of Barclays, was for a time on the council of the University of Warwick. Apparently he was making sure the new institution got off to a good start—he eventually passed his council seat on to A. Rudge, a more junior Barclays director. Incidentally, the Vice-Chancellor of Warwick, J. Butterworth, is also on the board of the big Nuffield Foundation, whose chairman for many

years was A.A. Gibbs of Barclays.

Of all the government boards, the most important is that of the Bank of England. In 1979 the directors were:

Gordon Richardson, Governor
George Blanden
Sir Adrian Cadb
Sir Robert Clark
J.M. Clay
Lord Rothschild
J.C.R. Dow
G.A. Drain
J.S. Fforde
Sir Hector Laing
Sir Maurice Laing
C.W.M. McMahon
Lord Nelson
Sir Alastair Pilkington
Lord Robens
Sir David Steel
Lord Weir

Four of the directors are private sector bankers; Clay is a former chairman of Hambros; Clark is the Chairman of Hill Samuel; Rothschild is with the family bank; Nelson is a director of the National Bank of Australia. Richardson is a former director of Lloyds and a former Chairman of JHS Wagg. Seven important non-banking capitalists also sit on the board of the Bank of England, namely Cadbury, the Laings, Pilkington, Steel and Weir. At least three seem to represent family interests. Members of the Pilkington, Cadbury and Rothschild family appear traditionally on the Board. Previous directors also include members of the Hambro, Keswick and Baring families.



Lord Armstrong and his vault. Formerly head of the Civil Service, he resigned to become Chairman of Midland Bank.

Some members of the ruling class spend their entire careers moving from one board to another, taking care of the interests of British imperialism behind closed doors while the politicians at Westminister conduct their circus with media assistance. Sir Kenneth Keith, until recently Chairman of Hill Samuel, is one such leader of British imperialism. We list below a partial list of his past and present posts as director, governor, council member, etc.:

Defense Industries Council
Engineering Employees Federation
National Institute of Economic and Social Research
University of Lancaster School of Business
Manchester Business School
Society of British Aerospace Companies
National Economic Development Council
Confederation of British Industry/NEDC Liason Committee

The members of the ruling class, who obviously devote a lot of time and energy to making decisions, have also taken a lot of trouble to ensure that their orders are carried out. The British state apparatus is organised like a giant army, whose generals are finance capitalists like Keith and their friends and whose foot soldiers are ordinary government employees. As a general rule they have arranged that the officers in this army—the judges, higher civil servants, real army officers and so on—come for the most part from the capitalist class. This means, roughly speaking, that these people are the sons and daughters of wealthy families and have often attended Eton, Harrow, Oxford or Cambridge. At the higher levels these officials often become actively involved in private industry, moving back and forth between government and business. The late Lord Armstrong, former head of the Civil Service, was a good example: he retired from the Civil Service to become the Chairman of Midland Bank!

Many have documented the way in which capitalists staff the state apparatus, but this situation has often been misinterpreted. Tony Benn, for example, always complains that the civil service prevents Labour Governments from carrying out supposedly socialist measures. According to this point of view the capitalists influence the government through the civil service by their control of how decisions are carried out, not how they are made. This makes it seem as if their hold over government is not very strong, that it is based primarily on unconscious, ingrained prejudices, and that the capitalist class is a vague collection of individuals with similar privileged backgrounds rather than a conscious, well organized clique of exploiters. In fact, there is nothing very subtle about the way in which the big capitalists run the government: they have arranged things so that they and their friends are the people officially allowed to make the decisions while the government employees are legally required to carry them out. The British ruling class (those who live off the proceeds of exploitation) numbers in the hundreds of thousands, but real power is concentrated in the hands of the members and hangers-on of the few dozen or so families which control the big banks.

THE THINK TANKS

In capitalist democracies such as Britain, power is supposed to be exercised by the people's representatives and government is supposed to be conducted in the open, under the watchful eye of a free press. The general rule, however, is that the more public and democratic an organization is, the less real power it possesses. Parliament, for example, is elected and has its debates broadcast; it is virtually powerless. The Cabinet is appointed, its meetings are private, and it makes some decisions. Public Committees and Boards are even further away from the limelight, and the bankers feel much more free to join these bodies and take an active part in decisionmaking.

Nevertheless, the publicity-shy bankers find even the public committees and boards unsuitable for long-range policymaking. If our general rule is correct, there are organizations even less public where members of the ruling class and their servants can meet and sort out the really vital issues without having to worry about pretending to carry out "the will of the people." There are in fact a number of such bodies which fit this description, most notably the Royal Institute for International Affairs (R.I.I.A.), Political and Economic planning (PEP) and the National Institute for Economic and Social Research (NIESR) and the National Economic Development Council (NEDC). The bankers use these organizations primarily as "think tanks" for strategic planning. The "think tanks" are also convenient for directing the work of ambitious university professors, trade union officials, politicians and civil servants who are keen to serve the ruling class.

The R.I.I.A. is undoubtedly the most powerful "think tank." Its founder members include 3 members of the Astor family, owners of a large portion of Hambros Bank which is currently linked to the Barclays group. A prominent member of the first R.I.I.A. Council in 1926 was John Robert Clynes. Labour M.P., House Secretary from 1929-31, former President of the National Union of General and Municipal workers, who helped sell out the General Strike. In 1958 Denis Healey sat on the Council along with two Hambros directors, F.D.L. Astor and Joceleyn Hambro, as well as Kenneth Younger whose family is connected to Barclays via the Bank of Scotland.

The present Council (1979-80) includes at least six members who are either directors of banks or closely linked through family ties.

Lord Home: Former dir. Bank of Scotland (Barclays)
Lord Harlech: Director, Commercial Bank of Wales (also linked to the Rockefeller financial empire).
D. Astor: family links with Hambros Bank
W.M. Clarke: Director, Grindlays Bank (Lloyds).
Lord Greenhill of Harrow, Director, S.G. Warburg
Sir Richard Powell: Director, Lloyds.

The R.I.I.A. publishes two big journals (**International Affairs** and **World Today**), conducts a number of projects each year and invites scores of speakers from all over the world to its meetings, including David Owen and Peter Shore from the Labour Party and, of course, Lord Carrington. The R.I.I.A. is funded primarily by the big banks and corporations but it also receives a sizeable grant from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The R.I.I.A. "Jubilee Appeal Fund" netted 5,000 pounds each from the Bank of England, Barclays and Nat West while Lloyds, and Midland each contributed a thousand.

While the R.I.I.A. is designed to further the international military and economic aims of British imperialism, the P.E.P. formulates domestic strategy. Founded in 1931, it puts out 10 reports and 3 major books each year. Like the R.I.I.A. it funds dozens of research projects, thus exerting considerable control over university education. Like the Nuffield Foundation, whose benefactor Alfred Morris (eventually Ld. Nuffield) financed Oswald Mosely and the fascist Blackshirts in the 1930s P.E.P. now sometimes mildly rebukes the ruling class. Last year, for example, it published a detailed report on racial discrimination in Britain. However, it would be a big mistake to conclude that P.E.P. or any similar organization can be "progressive" or that the bankers who control it are unable to oversee the general work of the organization. The ruling class knows that its policies cause continuous suffering and anger, and so they try to promote a loyal opposition that poses no real threat to their position. Lord Roll of Ipsden is the President of P.E.P. and has wide experience in this type of activity based on his membership of numerous Councils and Foundations, including also the presidency of N.I.E.S.R. Lord Roll is also a former director of the Bank of England and Chairman of S.G. Warburg Merchant Bank. P.E.P. receives most of its funds from the big banks and corporations and maintains a formal link with the Council for Economic Development, the key United States ruling class organization for developing economic strategies and dominated by the Rockefeller and Morgan capital groups.

The N.I.E.S.R. is better known than the P.E.P. or R.I.I.A. because of its successes in "economic forecasting" (predicting how high inflation and unemployment will rise in a given period), and because of its supposedly 'radical' tone. Throughout the 1970s, while the London School of Business and other economic think tanks were calling hungrily for cutbacks and wage cuts the N.I.E.S.R. was making 'concerned' statements about rising unemployment and calling for more government spending to "get people back to work." Labour Party "left wingers" like the Tribune Group are fond of quoting the N.I.E.S.R. Len Murray, head of the TUC, is on the Executive Committee. Recently the Deputy Director, Frank Blackaby, wrote a book called **De-Industrialization** (1978) advocating a policy of import controls, govern-

ment spending and incomes policy.

The N.I.E.S.R., like the other think tanks, depends heavily on banks and corporations for support. In addition to Lord Roll, the President, it includes Ernest Woodroofe of Shroeders Merchant bank (linked to Lloyds) among banker-directors. An increasing number of bankers and big capitalists are calling for import controls and wage cuts to save British capitalism and this policy will require massive attacks on the working class if it is to succeed. Support for such a program on the part of the Labour "left-wingers" and others represents an alliance with certain banks within the ruling class. NEDC, which we will mention later, is also tied in with the bankers in the same way.

THE LABOUR PARTY AND THE TRADE UNIONS

The evidence we have gathered might seem, on the face of it, to support the "Labourist" theory of power. It does appear that the Conservative Party is the party of the bankers. The Tories are financed directly by banks and businesses, many of their leaders are bankers and while in power the leading finance capitalists (like Carrington) participate directly in government as cabinet ministers. The Labour Party, on the other hand, is financed by the trades unions, its leaders are intellectuals or (occasionally) former workers, and businessmen are hardly ever appointed to cabinet posts.

In fact, however, the Labour Party is just as much the party of finance capital as the Conservative Party is. It is also linked tightly, although not so publicly, with the big banks. Prominent Labour politicians must, for the sake of party image, avoid getting involved too openly in business. They avoid, say, becoming company directors but are not above more discrete forms of wheeling and dealing. In the early 1970s, for example, Callaghan and a group of Welsh Labour M.P.s took a big stake in Julian Hodge's Commercial Bank of Wales (Challaghan is also a substantial shareholder in Hodge Finance). Hodge was, for a time, a director of the Standard Chartered Bank (with big investments in South Africa). One of the directors of the Welsh bank is none other than Lord Harlech, a leading ruling class figure who appears to be a "link man" with the Rockefellers. Harlech is a former Ambassador to the U.S. while the First National Bank of Chicago (a Rockefeller bank) owns shares in the Commercial Bank of Wales. If Callaghan did not have to worry about passing himself off as a 'socialist' he might well join the board of one of friend Hodge's banks.

Of course, once a Labour politicians leaves (or is forced out of) politics, he no longer has to worry about his image, and can openly pursue a business career. There are many such examples of "socialists"-turned capitalist; Lord Robens is one. He used to be plain old Alf Robens, Labour M.P. He became the Head of the Coal Board and acquired several other directorships, including the Bank of England, Vickers, **Times** Newspapers and Trust House Forte (under the chairmanship of fellow capitalist and nobleman Lord Thorneycroft, Tory Party chairman). Several union leaders have also followed the same route. Lord Greene was once general secretary of the N.U.R. and was a member of the TUC General Council for 18 years. While still a member of the General Council he joined the board of the Bank of England and National Freight; in 1975 he left the TUC for the boards of **Times** Newspapers and Rio Tinto Zinc. Labour apologists might call Robens and Greene "traitors" or defectors, but in fact these men never really changed allegiance. They made a smooth transition from serving the ruling class as fake socialists to serving the ruling class as genuine capitalists.

Although Labour politicians and union leaders avoid public involvement in business itself, they are not nearly so fussy about the ruling class think tanks which, as noted above, are not nearly so public. The connections of Healey, Shore and Owen with the R.I.I.A. were mentioned earlier; Healey and Owen are also members of Rockefeller's Trilateral Commission. Healey served as Councillor on the R.I.I.A. for 12 years (1948-60). He also is a former member of the Institute for Strategic Studies, another ruling class think tank for sorting out conventional military as well as counter-insurgency strategy, and the Bilderberg Commission, similar to the Trilateral Commission.

The social democrats are particularly active in the NEDC where capitalist industrial strategies

are formulated. Here the trade union hacks play a valuable role in attempting to get the working class to go along with wage cuts and lay-offs as long as they are "planned." At National Economic Development Board meetings Len Murray, David Basnett. Moss Evans and other union hacks make policies along with government representative and

Sir George Burton of Barclays
Alex Jarratt of Midlands
Sir Jeremy Morse of Lloyds
Sir Charles Villiers of JHS Wagg (formerly)
Sir Leslie Murphy of JHS Wagg (formerly)

Although it is true that Labour avoids appointing obvious capitalists to cabinet posts, they do not apply the same restrictions when it comes to other positions on government boards and committees. There are numerous examples of bankers getting important posts thanks to the "anti-capitalist" party. One person in particular whose career has received a big boost from the Labour Party is Lord Kearton of Hill Samuel Merchant Bank (allied with Lloyds). In the late '60s the Wilson government established the Industrial Reorganisation Commission in order to rationalize British industry by encouraging mergers. Tony Benn himself set up the IRC and this "arch-socialist" selected a group of businessmen and bankers headed by Lord Kearton. One of the companies created was GEC, controlled by the Lloyds group. In the mid-'70s Benn and Labour created another powerful nationalized firm, the British National Oil Corporation (BNOC). Lloyds Bank dominates BNOC through its chairman, Lord Kearton again, with support from Midlands.

Shortly after the Tory election victory Margaret Thatcher (probably representing Barclays interests) announced plans to break up BNOC. Banker Kearton objected, of course, as did his sponsors, the "left" wing of the Labour Party. The so-called "Communist" Party (**Marxism Today**, Oct. 1979) claimed that BNOC should be preserved intact in the "national interest." The rabid nationalists of the Tribune group (**Tribune**, 17 August 1979) howled that BNOC was under attack by the "EEC" and "multinationals" (EEC and multinationals are 'codewords' for foreigners). This shows that it is not just the "right" wing of the Labour Party (Callaghan, Healey, Owen, etc.) with ties to the banks. It seems quite probable that the Labour "leftists" in particular are close to the Lloyds group.

In summary, then, it is clear that a very small group—perhaps no more than one or two hundred—finance capitalists linked with an even smaller group of families, have almost uncontested control of industry, both private and public; the government, the mass media, education—in fact every institution of importance in society. Worst of all, they control as well the only really powerful organisations which seem to oppose capitalism (the TUC and the Labour Party) and the leaders of these supposedly "socialist" and "progressive" forces turn out to be clearly associated with the ruling clique.

Many people who sincerely and genuinely consider themselves leftist and socialist will find this difficult to believe. The evidence, however, is very clear, and our Leninist theory certainly explains why nearly a century of Labor Party gradualism has failed to win anything substantial or lasting for the British working class. Furthermore, the situation is exactly as the original and unrevised theories of Marxism would predict. After all, it was Marx who said that the state was a "committee of the bourgeoisie as a whole" and Engels who called it "the war engine of capital against labour." It was Lenin who called it "a machine which one class uses to suppress another."

NATIONALISATION IS NO ANSWER

The Labour strategy of nationalisation and extending the public sector will not result in socialism (the rule of the working class) because the capitalist class already controls the public sector. The result of the policy of nationalisation, when carried to its logical conclusion, is instead **state capitalism**, a system in which the state owns all of industry and becomes, to use Engels' phrase, "the national capitalist." State capitalism is the form adopted by the once-socialist USSR and China, and also by a number of fascist-ruled Third World countries, such as Egypt. Apologists for state capitalism claim that these countries cannot be capitalist because there is no private ownership of the means of production. We have seen, however, that even in Britain, the big capitalists do not officially own the companies they control. Private ownership is obsolete.

Of course, Benn and his followers would argue that "genuine" nationalisation would end the banker control of industry because the banks themselves would also be nationalised. But Britain already has a nationalised bank, the Bank of England, which is firmly in the hands of the Barclays and Lloyds groups and the Pilkington, Cadbury, Rothschild families, et al. The nationalisation of the banks, an important step toward state capitalism, would probably means simply an enormous increase in the power of the Lloyds and Barclays groups at the expense of their rivals connected with other banks. A state capitalist Britain would be controlled by an even smaller clique of finance capitalists, probably centered around the Hambro and Samuel family.

The British imperialists may very well adopt state capitalism in a desperate attempt to halt their rapid decline. Britain was once the number one capitalist power, but has now been reduced to the status of junior partner of a now-declining U.S. The British bosses realise that if they want to claw their way back to the top of the heap, they will have to (1) remodernise their industry, (2) begin to rearm, and (3) discipline the working class to accept the suffering (high unemployment, low wages, and eventually some form of conscription) which this would entail. To carry out this program the capitalists themselves need unity and they may decide that the Lloyds/Barclays rivalry is a luxury they cannot afford.

NATIONALISM VS. SOCIALISM

Benn's program for "reindustrialisation" is a program for an aggressive, competitive, state capitalist British imperialism. It is a program to strengthen capitalism, not to destroy it. That is why banker-run think tanks like the N.I.E.S.R. are helping to propagate the program.

It is possible, of course, that not everyone in the ruling class is convinced that state capitalism is the answer, or that this fake brand of "socialism" will be able to keep its credibility. Some of them may prefer Hitler-type fascism to British imperialism back on its feet. After all, it nearly worked for the German imperialists in WW II. Or they might try first one and then the other, as in Chile.

No matter what the bosses finally come up with, the working class will suffer if they have their way. It may seem we have no choice, that the capitalist control of the institutions of society makes them all-powerful. In fact the bosses are in bad trouble. They are weak and getting weaker. They have been trying for many years to clamp down on industrial workers, but have been frustrated time after time (as in the '74 miners' strike) in spite of the fact that the TUC apparatus is in the hands of their loyal lieutenants. They have been trying for years to develop a mass fascist party (the NF—National Front) but have failed in spite of the thinly disguised all-out support of their media. Now they have to organise themselves to help the US take on the massive military power of the USSR. They can hardly feel confident.

The choice facing the working class and its allies (sections of the middle class) is whether to help British capitalism in its hour of difficulty, or to take advantage of this opportunity to finish it off. Helping capitalism means supporting Bennery and Labourism. Finishing it off means organizing a socialist revolution.

The bosses' media carefully cultivate the impression that revolutions are things which happen very infrequently and in far away countries, certainly not here in Britain in the foreseeable future. It is true that genuine revolutions—where one class overthrows another—don't exactly happen every day, but it is also true that revolutionary crises—in which at least the opportunity exists—are becoming more and more common in the world today. Just the past five years have seen the events in Portugal, in Angola and Mozambique after Portuguese fascism fell, in Nicaragua and El Salvador, in Iran (a big one), in South Korea (a smaller one), and just recently in Poland.

Nevertheless, none of these crises resulted in the overthrow of capitalism. Most of these movements were defeated not militarily, but politically, by being diverted into supporting supposed "popular" but actually pro-capitalist forces. In Nicaragua, pseudo-socialist nationalists took the leadership, while in Iran the clergy played this role. In Poland, the Catholic Church and "dissident intellectuals" with ties to Western imperialists, were in the leading positions. The real reason that this happened is that in none of these countries was there a truly revolutionary party like the Russian Bolsheviks in 1917 or Chinese Communists in 1949, although there were certainly many thousands of individuals who wanted revolution. In some cases, there were even loose anti-capitalist organizations.

This is the situation in Britain today, despite the existence of large self-styled "socialist" or even "revolutionary" groups like the official "Communist" Party or the SWP. Suppose, for example, that in a few years' time Britain was plunged into a crisis like France experienced in 1968. Universities and factories occupied, a general strike, millions in the streets (not impossible!) Suppose that at the height of the crisis, Benn, backed by the likes of Lord Kearton, forms a "socialist" government of "national salvation," perhaps even pretending to "seize" power from the Tories. Is there any doubt that the Labour Left/CP/Trotskyite crowd would support such a government? Some of them might hesitatingly call for workers to "give Benn a chance," but others would enthusiastically welcome the birth of "Greater Britain."

If the evidence in Who Rules Britain proves anything, it proves that capitalism/imperialism cannot be reformed. Decades of Labour Party "socialism" and nationalisation have only strengthened the power of the finance capitalists over the government, over the economy, over education and the media, even over the workers' own unions. Capitalists do not share power with the working class; the class struggle is for all or nothing. Only a socialist revolution can end capitalism and unemployment, racism, fascism, and bloody wars of conquest. Under socialism, the answer to the question Who Rules Britain? will be: The working class.

This analysis of the situation in Britain and the U.S. appeared as an editorial in Challenge-Desafío, 7/22/81.

Rebellion in Britain – Is U.S. Next?

A spectre is haunting U.S. bosses – that spectre is Britain.

From the industrial midlands to the heart of London, wide-spread rebellion has erupted in 30 cities against three of the scourges of capitalism: fascism, racism and mass unemployment. Jobless youth, black, white and Asian, mainly from working class areas, are taking militant, multi-racial actions to defend their class interests. Their targets are political: the cops, police stations, the right-wing "skinheads" (the Klan/Nazis of England), and thieving merchants who suck workers dry. Their tools have been rocks, gasoline bombs (Molotov cocktails) and, in many cases, sheer overwhelming numbers. So many hundreds of cops have been sent to the hospital that the Thatcher gang has talked about calling out troops to put down the continuing rebellion. "Special courts" – the bosses' word for fascist "law" – have already been established to "try" nearly 3,000 arrested rebels.

Why this uncontrolled outbreak against the so-called masters of putting down dissent? The problems created by capitalism as carried out by the Labor government prior to Thatcher and now by the Conservatives have become too intolerable for the working class to bear, especially the youth. Official unemployment in Britain is now at 3,000,000 (the highest since the Great Depression), in a country one-fourth the size of the U.S. Over 60% of black youth are jobless nationally.

First there was the closing of mills and the laying off of tens of thousands of workers (sound familiar?) begun under the Labor government whose nationalization of some failing industries was the way the British ruling class chose to beat an "orderly retreat" from their once top-dog position among the world's imperialist powers. But now, with the colonies gone, Britain's bosses must really take aim at the British working class. As indicated by *London Daily Mirror* correspondent John Pilger, writing in the *New York Times*(March 6, 1981):

> Much of the poverty imposed on millions of Britons derives directly from two Thatcher budgets: one gave tax handouts to the richest 7%, the other further endowed the richest 2%. These are being paid for by the dismantling of a fragile welfare system that in the past barely held the line for the majority, many of them pitifully paid.

This dismantling of social services, introduction of "tight money" and attempt to "control inflation" by driving up unemployment (sound familiar?) all are the hallmarks of the Thatcher government. It is these policies to save a declining British capitalism that have led to this mass rebellion, which is fast stripping away the British illusion that "it can't happen here."

Yes, "the Thatcher government, with the help of the legacies of an especially arrogant and authoritarian Labor Government that preceeded it, has changed all that," writes Pilger, "and is waging class war in the streets, at workplaces, in the schools, at the hearths of the old, sick, disabled and powerless . . . [a] direct assault on working class lives." (Sound familiar?)

According to this article, "Hunger has not been known in Britain since the 1930s" (even during World War II). But now, "64% of Britain's elderly pensioners are acutely impoverished and 70,000 of them are slowly starving." He writes of a 61-year-old skilled lathe operator who worked at his trade for 35 years and now "never eats meat or fruit now and then (has) one or two carrots." He writes of the opening of a soup kitchen for children in the typical working class town of Crowland.

Is there a meaning here for the U.S.? The Reagan Administration has criticized the Thatcher government for not cutting enough! As Pilger writes, "Reagan's own scorched-earth budget cutting proposals are profoundly Thatcherite in one vital issue that Americans do not often speak about: class." they are "a preview of the coming brutalization of American working people."

The young anti-fascist workers in Britain – black and white and Asian – have had enough. They are now leading the fight-back against Thatcher's capitalism and will eventually be joined by the whole working class. Such an all-out rebellion in the U.S. could shake the U.S. ruling class (the big bosses and bankers), along with their lackies in the labor movement "leadership," to their very boots. The main missing ingredient in both the British rebellion as well as here in the U.S. has been communist leadership.

Communists go beyond capitalism in an organized, long-range way, aiming for the complete overthrow of a profit system that causes unemployment, racism, rotting subways, police brutality, fascism and the KKK/Nazis, and world imperialist war.

You can't reform such a system. It is not an "accident" or due to "bad politicians." Politicians, liberal and conservative, serve their rich masters by directing the armed force of the state against all working class rebellions. That's why PLP fights for a revolution led by the working class to smash the bosses' state power and establish workers' state power – socialism.

The spectre of communism haunting Europe that Marx and Engels spoke about in the ***Communist Manifesto*** will leap the Atlantic. Despite all the anti-communist filth spread by an hysterical bosses' media, the working class will choose life over death, workers' power over bosses' power, communism over capitalism.

The spectre haunting Britain, the U.S. and the entire capitalist world – including the Russian and Chinese capitalists, too – will inevitably destroy that system. Truly, the multi-racial British youth feel they "have nothing to lose but their chains." We must not only back them all they way, not only spread rebellion here, but build such an unshakeable revolutionary communist PLP, embedded in the working class that it will make Marx's clarion call to the international working class come alive: "We have a world to win!"

By J.P.

The Crucial Years: 1933-37

Auto Workers and Communism

The first article of this series traced the development of a Communist-led union of automobile workers, and outlined the ideas which guided the party's work. Those ideas included, among others, reliance on the workers, building of multi-racial, working class unity, militant struggle, and a refusal to play by the rules of the legal system. These ideas, while not in themselves revolutionary, were consistent with and had their origins in revolutionary ideas and strategy. They constituted, in my judgment, important elements of what is sometimes called "the mass line." The mass line is not, as the revisionists would have it, "where people are at": it is (at least as I understand it) an attempt to derive a Communist analysis and strategy which has three objectives: (1) to lead the mass movement to victory, (2) to win the movement's participants to an understanding of and a participation in the Communist movement, and (3) to broaden the concept of victory so that it is understood that a growing Communist movement is the most important and exciting victory which can emerge from any reform struggle.

In this article, I want to continue to use this framework to evaluate the role of Communists in auto during what I view as the most crucial period of the party's work: 1933-1937. This period saw a gradual shift between two political orientations. In the early years of this period, Communists built a left-center coalition between themselves and large numbers of non-Communist workers in what Communists then described as "the united front from below." This left-center coalition was essentially built around the program which Communists developed in the AWU (the Communist-led union described in the first article). But during the period the Communists described as the "popular front," the party abandoned many of those ideas in favor of a

clearly subordinate partnership with the CIO leadership. This led, I will argue, to a tragic paradox: as Communists individually rose to union leadership, and the party gained widespread acceptance, the influence of Communist ideas actually declined.

In the summer of 1933, following the Detroit strike wave of early 1933 which was described in the first article of this series, the leaderhip of the Communist Party convened what they called an "Extraordinary Party Conference" to discuss the situation in the Party. The Open Letter, which served as a call to the conference, set forth five basic weaknesses in the Party. First, recruiting was down considerably from the preceding year. Second, the social composition of the Party was undesirable: the majority of Party members were unemployed and the proportion of unemployed was consistently rising. Third, the new recruits were usually **not** from "the most important strata of workers," that is, those employed in basic industry. Fourth, shop work "remains disgracefully weak." Fifth, the work of lower units was not sufficiently aided by concrete plans and suggestions from leadership groups. Running through this analysis, and throughout the Open Letter as a whole, was the recognition that unemployed struggles had become the major aspect of the Party's work, not from conscious political strategy, but simply because the Party was "drifting along the line of least resistance." It was obviously easier for a party organizer in Youngstown to become part of Youngtown's unemployed masses than to become a steel worker. While unemployed work was important, it was more important to build a base for the Party in the nation's mass production industries. The Open Letter, and the Party conference which followed it, laid out an enormous two-pronged task for the small Party: the organization of the hitherto unorganized industrial working class and the creation of a solid base of industrial workers for the Communist movement.

There are two important points to be made about the Open Letter. First, the analysis of the need to shift the Party's emphasis from unemployed to industrial workers was made in spite of the fact that unemployed workers had proven receptive to the Party. The point was not to organize the workers who were the most receptive or the most exploited, but to organize the workers who had the **power** to grind the society to a halt. Second, the Open Letter, and the intense Communist activity which followed it, reveals the enormous organizational power of democratic centralism. Party leaders diagnosed a weakness within the Party and summoned the membership to correct it, but not by fiat, or, "commandism." Instead, an open letter was issued to the Party membership, a conference was convened and Party members throughout the country endorsed the new emphasis and participated in making plans to implement the change. The precise strategy for each industry was shaped by the comrades in various industries, but the conference as a whole formulated the overall direction of the Party. This approach to democratic centralism was not always characteristic of the party, as we shall see.

At the time of the Extraordinary Party Conference, the Party was still committed to building the revolutionary unions, but it had stopped viewing them as revolutionary unions and started to see them in a somewhat different light. One of the veterans of the strikes in 1933 outlined the rationale for continuing to build the AWU. Although the remarks are in the form of slogans to be placed before the automobile workers, they reveal the Party's new conception of the AWU:

> Instead of company unions, rank and file unions of the workers. Instead of unions controlled by open shoppers and AFL leaders, who endorse the slavery program of the auto bosses, a union in every shop, organized and controlled by the workers themselves . . . Instead of a union that is led and guided by the AFL leadership, which is taking the lead in forcing the auto bosses' code upon the workers, we must bring forward the militant Auto Workers Union. [John Schmies, "The Open Letter and the Tasks of the Detroit District," **The Communist, XII** (October, 1933), 991-992.]

Communists viewed the AWU as the only existing union which could adequately represent the aspirations of auto workers. At the same time, they become convinced (I think correctly, but this is obviously a matter for discussion and debate) that their earlier conception of a "revolutionary union" was narrow and sectarian. For a union to adequately represent workers in a given plant, it had to be able to organize the vast majority of the workers, not simply the most radical or militant. Communists began to emphasize that the Communist-led unions were open to all workers and to downplay their connection with the Communist Party.

The memoirs of a Communist auto worker provide an interesting example of the rather flexible interaction, during the years 1933-1934, between Communist-led unions, independent unions not connected with the Party, and the AFL. In 1932, Wyndham Mortimer and two other workers went to the local AFL to seek help in organizing a union local at the White Motors Company in Cleveland. Harry McLaughlin, executive secretary of the Cleveland Federation of Labor, told Mortimer that "no one can organize that bunch of hunkies out there." After a short, but loud, discussion, Mortimer and his friends left in disgust. After that meeting, a group of workers met at Mortimer's

home and decided to organize an independent union. In 1933, Mortimer read about the Detroit strike wave analyzed in part one of this series and was impressed by the AWU. He sought out John Williamson, the Ohio District Organizer of the Communist Party, and Williamson put Mortimer in touch with Philip Raymond. Mortimer found Williamson a sympathetic and committed working class activist. Williamson probably brought Mortimer into the Party. Raymond came to Cleveland to address a meeting Mortimer set up, and Mortimer convinced the independent union members to join the AWU.

As Mortimer and the group around him brought more workers into the AWU, the AFL finally went into action. The AFL Metal Trades Council (which had said that White Motors could not be organized) now offered the workers at White Motors a federal union charter, and invited them to choose "between Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin." The AFL achieved some success. Some workers had been won to the AFL because of anti-Communism, but, most were attracted to the AFL's promise of a united industrial union. After serious talks with workers committed to the AFL, Mortimer's group called a meeting of all the workers in the plant. Mortimer opened the meeting with the following remarks:

> They [the bosses] have won in the sense that they have succeeded in dividing us over the issue of union affiliation. We must find a way to restore unity among ourselves . . . .
>
> I am personally interested in one thing. I want to see a united and strong union at White Motor, and a union that is run by the membership. It will matter little what we call such an organization as long as it is ours, and as long as we, the membership, determine its policy.
>
> I, therefore, propose . . . that we dissolve the independent union and that we all join and become members of the federal union of the AFL. I am fully aware that the federal union is not the complete answer to our needs. It is not an industrial union, but under it we can organize our plant. And if we fight for and retain real democracy in our ranks, we can, I am sure, use the federal union as a base to build the kind of union we need and must have. Whichever road we use, let us all stay together. [Wyndham Mortimer, **Organize: My Life as A Union Man** (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971, pp. 54-60].

Stalin: The People's Choice

Similar decisions were made by Communist auto workers all over the country; only in Detroit did some workers remain in the AWU.

The "federal local unions" to which Mortimer referred were the AFL's answer to demands for an industrial union of automobile workers. Rather than charter an automobile workers' union, the AFL issued charters to federal locals in various automobile plants. These workers in these locals were to be distributed among the existing craft unions, particularly the machinists. Other workers would remain in these federal locals which had no autonomy and were isolated from one another. Thus, when Mortimer stated that he was "fully aware that the federal union is not the complete answer to our needs," he was making a strong understatement. Nevertheless, Communists, recognizing that large numbers of workers were joining these federal AFL locals, took the lead in forming local unions, in building city and statewide councils of local unions, and in pressing for a single, international, industrial union for automobile workers.

The leadership of the American Federation of Labor offered a program which differed from the Communist program for automobile workers in virtually every particular. Rather than a single, industrial union for automobile workers, as the Communists advocated, the AFL offered federal locals and the parcelling out of automobile workers to various craft unions. Where the Communists stressed militancy, the AFL called for relying on the reasonableness of the employers and the good will of the government. As a recent historian has noted, "the ideas of industrial unionism, unity of all auto workers, aggressive strike action, and rank and file control provided a more realistic blueprint for unionization than the AFL's craft unionism, avoidance of strikes, reliance on government mediation, and control from the top down." (Keeran, 118)

As the leaders of federal AFL locals pressed for a national auto strike to guarantee nondiscrimination against union members, increased wages, and lower maximum hours, the chief AFL organizer in auto, William Collins anxiously sought the intervention of the President. Although Collins never

intended to allow a strike, he let local leaders organize to strike as a lever to gain presidential intervention. After the National Labor Board failed to recommend a settlement, workers prepared to walk off the job. Roosevelt then invited AFL and company officials to Washington, and Collins announced that the strike was to be deferred.

On March 25, 1934, Roosevelt announced a general auto settlement. The settlement said nothing about wages or hours. It referred cases of union discrimination to an Auto Labor Board which was dominated by the employers. It proposed a scheme of "proportional representation" for all unions in the plant, which allowed the company to set up its own company unions. Donaldson Brown of GM acknowledged that the employers were "tremendously happy" with the settlement, as was Collins. Communists labeled the settlement a "sell-out." In Cleveland, disillusioned auto workers burned their membership cards; in Flint, workers ripped the cards to shreds in anger.

Collins argued that the union, which had recruited only 32,000 of the 470,000 workers in the industry, was not strong enough to win a strike. Communists and numerous other auto workers disagreed. It may have, in fact, been true that the federal locals were too weak to conduct a national strike. The point, however, is that the AFL had no strategy for overcoming these weaknesses and no sense of organizing for a successful strike. Since it expected to win its gains without striking, primarily through the good will of government and management, it never adequately prepared for a strike. When workers pressed for a strike, the AFL could always reply that conditions were not right.

Workers within the AFL struck in spite of the opposition of the AFL leadership. On April 11, 1934, just one month after the settlement of the proposed national auto strike, a federal local struck Bigham Stamping and Tool Company, Logan Gear Company, and the Electric Auto Lite Company. All companies continued to operate as less than half of the workers left their jobs. William Green of the AFL believed the strike to be a mistake and offered no assistance. Within a few weeks the strike looked hopeless. Some 30 workers from the Bingham and Auto Lite plants, facing impending defeat, sought advice on the strike at the local office of the Communist Party. The local Communist officials, along with Bob Travis, a Communist who worked in the Toledo Chevrolet plant, helped the Auto Lite strikers arrange picketing, and party women established a shop kitchen.

On April 17, in response to a company application, a restraining order was issued limiting picketing to 25 persons at the two Auto Lite plants, and prohibiting picketing by the Lucas County Unemployed League, the Lucas County Unemployed Council, and all other non-union people. Both unemployed organizations were led by radical groups: the Unemployed League, the largest of the two in Toledo, was led by an organization called the American Workers Party, and the Unemployed Council was led by the Communist Party. Had the injunction been obeyed, of course, the strike would have been lost. Production was continuing at both plants, and the strike would have simply petered out.

Defiance of the restraining order rescued the walkout from certain defeat. On May 15, deputies arrested 107 strikers for violating the May 14 injunction. The next day 46 were arrested. On May 17, over 200 strikers and sympathizers stormed the jail. On May 18, a similar crowd demonstrated in the corridors of the courthouse as Judge Stuart opened hearings on the contempt charges. After this, the picket lines swelled with Toledo workers. On Monday, May 21, 1,000 picketers demonstrated at Auto Lite. They stoned several carloads of scabs leaving the plant and scuffled with strikebreakers. The following day, 4,000 picketers and spectators appeared, and on Wednesday, 6,000. When several demonstrators were attacked, a major riot broke out. A Toledo Communist described the scene:

> The police and deputy sheriffs were helpless. The entire neighborhood was seized by the workers. The Communist Party and the YCL members played an active part in organizing squads in different streets around the plant and charged the police and the plant and when necessary retreated in an organized way. Hand to hand fighting with police took place with the workers getting the upper hand. The economic struggle developed into a political struggle, into class war. [Quoted in Keeran, p. 113]

Roosevelt: The Bosses' Choice

Scab car, and cops protecting it, are given the heave-ho by Ohio auto workers during 1937 strike wave in Auto. Many of these strikes were led by communists.

The scabs were trapped in the plant. The seige of the plant continued through the night and into the next day, when Ohio Governor George White sent in the National Guard. The National Guard used tear gas, vomiting gas, bayonets, and bullets to disperse the crowd. Two strike supporters were murdered. The next afternoon fighting again erupted between the guardsmen, and some 20,000 Toledo workers.

At this point, the Central Labor Council in Toledo proposed a general strike to counter the attack against the Auto Lite workers. AFL officials worked to halt any general strike. But the mass actions of the workers had effectively shut down the plant and the company was forced to bargain. On June 4, the company settled, granting a 5% wage increase and promising not to discriminate against union workers. Communists pointed out that the workers could have gained far more concessions had it not been for AFL sabotage. But the major fact remained: Auto Lite workers had defied the no-strike policy of the AFL, relied on Communists and other radicals outside of the union, and won one of the few signed agreements in the industry.

* * *

"Every time I hear the words 'international industrial union,'" fumed AFL leder William Collins, "I know exactly where it comes from. It comes straight from Moscow." As the AFL leaders approached the long-awaited first convention of federal AFL auto locals, they realized that their perspective was at odds with the perspective of most automobile workers. Most workers wanted a single industrial union of automobile workers, committed to militant struggle, with officials elected by the membership. The AFL wanted to appoint the union's officials, wanted to parcel out at least some of the auto workers to existing craft unions, and wanted to continue a policy of relying on the good will of business and government.

The AFL's strategy for overcoming the objections of auto workers to their ideas had two main components. First, the AFL simply did not allow the delegates to vote on crucial questions. William Green presented the delegates with a charter which stated that "the jurisdictional authority of other organizations, particularly over skilled mechanics in tool and die shops, must be respected and observed." Amendments to the charter were simply ruled out of order. Then Green announced that the officers of the auto union would be "designated by the President of the American Federation of Labor." Again, objections were ruled out of order. Second, the AFL sought to label its opponents as Communists. Only a small group of automobile workers supported the Communist Party, and the AFL leadership hoped that it could discredit the ideas of militant automobile workers by identifying them with a small, leftist party.

The AFL's strategy of anti-Communism presented the Communists with a difficult problem. Communists knew that the AFL raised the Communist issue to divert discussion away from the issues of industrial rather than craft unionism, of elected rather than appointed officials, and of militancy rather than class collaboration. To get into an extended debate over the merits of the Communist Party would be to fall into the AFL's trap, or so the Communists thought. For that reason, they ignored the attacks on them. But while it was probably true that defending the Communist Party was not primary at this point, it was still necessary. By not answering these attacks, or by answering them in a civil libertarian way, Communists fell into another trap, as we shall see.

By the following year, the AFL leadership realized that it could not continue to dictate the officers of the union. Mortimer, as the leader of the rank and file movement, was one natural candidate for the union presidency. But the presidency was also aggressively sought by a union activist named Homer Martin. Martin had been a Baptist minister, and his major claim to fame in the union was his oratorical ability. To avoid a contested election which he thought would endanger the "young and fragile organization," Mortimer did not run for the union presidency and was elected first vice-president instead. Recently, Roger Keeran, an historian who admires the Communist work in auto, has argued that Mortimer's decision not to run for the presidency was correct. His candidacy would have split the union, Keeran argues. Even if Mortimer had won, "his close connections with the CP might have alarmed AFL leaders, alienated CIO representatives, and repelled the industry's southern-born and conservative-minded workers." (Keeran, p. 146)

This argument cannot be rejected out of hand. It may well have been correct to avoid a hotly contested election in the early stage of the union's development. But while making this concession, it would therefore also be important to combat the anti-Communism which had dictated the concession. In the way the Communists sought to counter anti-Communism at the 1936 convention one can see the seeds of later errors. The most intensive debate at the convention centered around a proposal for the expulsion of Communists from the union. Mortimer opposed the resolution, but did not openly defend Communism. Instead, he made an argument that logically could apply to the KKK as easily as the CP:

> This question at bottom and basically is, do we have the right to think as we please or do we not have that right? That is the question. If any individual wants to believe in Communism or Socialism or any other kind of "ism" . . . he has a perfect right to do so. If you deny this right to the Communist, then you automatically deny it to all.

He continued with an analysis of Communism which was remarkable for its liberalism:

> Communists are not born, they are made . . . If economic conditions have forced many people to look to Communism . . . it is because they are poverty-stricken, their standard of living is lowered, their opportunities are abolished, and their future is black . . . if we rectify those conditions . . . there will be fewer Communists in the country.

The resolution was sent back to the constitution committee, and at the end of the convention, the delegates approved without debate what Keeran described as "an innocuous committee resolution" that expressed "unalterable opposition to Nazism, Fascism, and Communism."

The resolution, while it may have been organizationally innocuous (that is, it did not mandate the expulsion of Communists or deny Communists any rights within the union), was not at all politically innocuous. It fed the notion that Communism and Nazism, the extreme right and left, were somehow identical. Moreover, it helped to create a climate in which the Communists could be attacked **politically** at the convention, and the Communists would defend themselves **organizationally**. Over the years, this would help to engender an anti-Communist consensus.

Any assessment of the Communist work in auto up to this point would, I think, have to be mixed. The party had made the estimate that the central thrust of its work would be the drive for a democratic union, affiliated with the CIO and committed to organizing the entire industry. One could quarrel with that assessment and argue that even during this period, party-building should have been primary. But even if one accepts the idea that the drive for an industrial auto union was primary, one still can question the unwillingness to openly defend the Communist Party. The party had gained considerable credibility among those workers who worked with Communists in various struggles and strikes, but those workers who had not had direct contact with party members often had considerable prejudices about the party.

Following the convention, Mortimer was assigned to organize a strong local at the General Motors factories in Flint, Michigan. Mortimer, who had long realized that White Motors in Cleveland, stood on the periphery of the automobile industry, was anxious to confront GM. Mortimer, with the help of local Communist and non-Communist workers, built up a strong network of GM workers. Mortimer and Robert Travis, who had moved from Toledo to help organize in Flint, planned for a strike at the end of the year, right after the workers had been paid their Christmas bonuses. On December 28, workers in the other Fisher Body plant in Cleveland went out on strike. Mortimer left for Cleveland, and urged Travis to

strike General Motors as soon as possible. Even if other GM plants around the country continued to work, the entire production process would be shut down if the two Fisher body plants, one in Cleveland and one in Flint, were struck. On December 30, a worker reported that GM was loading dies out of the plant in an attempt to divert work to other plants to minimize the consequences of a strike in Flint. Travis immediately called a stewards meeting for the lunch hour. After a short discussion, the stewards voted to strike. That afternoon, when the whistle blew, male workers remained in the plant. Women workers were sent home. The most important strike of the decade had begun.

Inside the plant, strikers developed a cohesive, well-organized community. Some observers compared it to the Army. The editor of **Mill and Factory** after visiting Fisher Two described the "system of organization" as "a completely military type." "It was," one of the Chevrolet Four strikers recalled, "like war. The guys with me became my buddies." In important ways, however, it was quite different from the Army. Key decisions were made by the basic unit of government: twice-daily meetings of all 1200 strikers. In addition, strikers had elected a strike committee made up of fourteen members selected from the various plant departments. Bud Simons, another Communist, was elected chairman. According to an anti-Communist historian, "the available records indicate that the strike committee recognized the strikers themselves as the final authority in the plant and that it sought their consent for virtually all its decisions." (Fine, pages 156-57). Workers set up a reading room, performed plays, conducted court, set up food distribution, and, in general, fashioned a society based on proletarian democracy.

The GM sit-down was an example of Communists' ability to link short-term tactics with long-term perspective.

The sit-down strike at General Motors was another example of the Communists' ability to link short-term tactics with longer-term perspective. The sit-down itself was a tactic which demonstrated both to the employers and, equally important, to the workers themselves, the great power of the working class. By remaining in the plant, workers were not only able to see the idle machines every day, they were also able to draw on their own collective strength. It was quite a different experience from workers in their homes, away from the plant, doing rotating picket duty. Moreover, the institution of twice-daily meetings was important for two reasons. In a narrow, tactical sense, the meetings insured that neither Homer Martin nor the CIO leaders could sell out the strike. Any settlement or strategy had to be decided upon by the strikers themselves. More importantly it planted the seeds of workers' rule in the minds of the workers. The sit-down strike, and also the manner in which Communists organized the strike, was a brilliant tactic, both in its effectiveness in winning the strike, and in its ability to raise the consciousness of the workers. (This treatment of the strike is relatively brief because an excellent, extensive treatment of the strike has already been published as a PLP pamphlet, **Sit Down!** which is still readily available. (Copies may be ordered with the coupon the last page of this issue.)

Before leaving the GM strike, certain observations should be emphasized. First, the strike was led by Communists. Although non-Communists also played some important roles, the main strategists were Communists. Second, at key points during the strike, Communists made important tactical decisions. Third, when it was reported that Governor Frank Murphy was going to use troops to evacuate the plants, Communists led the opposition to strategies of "passive resistance" and "symbolic protest." Communists called for fighting the troops. The willingness of the workers to fight was a major factor in stopping the governor from sending troops. Fourth, the strike was the major breakthrough in the CIO's campaign to organize the basic industries. After the defeat of General Motors, U.S. Steel signed a contract with the Steel Workers Organizing Committee without a strike.

Following the victory over GM, UAW workers pressed for an agreement with Chrysler. When Chrysler refused to grant the UAW sole bargaining rights, workers sat down. Chrysler workers, historian Walter Galenson noted, faced "mounting public clamor against the sit-down strike." What this meant, of course, was that newspapers and politicians were ferociously attacking the sit-down strike. Murphy repeatedly threatened to use force against sit-down strikers. As in the Flint sit-down strike, Chrysler workers voted to defy the injunction and to remain inside the plants. Forty thousand sympathetic workers picketed outside the plants. When Murphy ordered the sheriff to enforce the injunction, 150,000 workers joined a protest rally in Cadillac Square.

The Chrysler strike was, in its own way, as significant as the General Motors strike. The GM strike established that the union was here to stay, that the company would have to deal with the union, rather than attempt to destroy it. At issue in the Chrysler strike was not the existence of the union–that had already been proven–but the existence of the sit-down strike. Bosses realized that the sit-down strike was an enormously powerful tool and were determined to stamp it out. John L. Lewis agreed to an evacuation of the plants without an agreement and Chrysler agreed not to continue production during negotiations. Strikers reluctantly left the plants. Two weeks later, an agreement was reached in which Chrysler recognized the UAW as the bargaining agent for its members only. Since the corporation had previously made this offer, the strike failed to attain its objective. Moreover, the sit-down strike virtually vanished from labor's arsenal after the GM victory.

The thinking of the Communists was recorded by Ruth McKenney who described a meeting of the Northern Ohio section of the Party in March, 1936, where the sit-down strike was discussed:

> He [James Keller, section leader in Akron] recited the events leading up to the Goodyear strike. The comrades in steel and auto bent over notebooks as he talked.
>
> "The sit-down is an extremely effective organizational weapon. But credit must go to Comrade Williamson for warning us against the danger of these surprise actions. The sit-downs came because the companies refused to bargain collectively with the union. Now we must work for regular relations between the union and the employers–and strict observation of union procedure on the part of the workers."
>
> The comrades in auto scribbled rapidly.
>
> (**Industrial Valley**, p. 340)

The Communist decision that it was important to "work for regular relations between the union and the employers and strict observance of union procedure on the part of the workers" was a momentous one. It occurred simultaneously with the bosses' realization that the union was here to stay and that they would have to co-opt rather than destroy the union. It was in these "regular relations" that the bosses were able, in later years, to whittle away at the concessions and power which workers had gained during the militant upsurge in the 1930s.

By 1937, the Communists had ceased to stand for a particular strategy within the labor movement for two quite different reasons. (In the first place), on the one hand, the CIO leadership had accepted certain ideas which Communists had pioneered: a single union of automobile workers, with jurisdiction over all automobile workers, run by the membership. But (in the second place), on the other hand, Communists had abandoned or modified earlier ideas. They no longer stressed the need to not play by the bosses' rules and they did not fight to extend the sit-down strike. Rather than fight to extend workers' power on the job, Communists fought to consolidate the position of the union. In 1937, then, Communists were barely distinguishable from CIO leaders.

By 1937, the Chrysler strike was just a straw in the wind. The new political outlook of the party, shaped by the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International which has been discussed extensively by PLP, was just beginning to become apparent. It was not until the next decade that the true meaning of the popular front would become clear. For that reason, I will forestall final conclusions until after the third article in this series. That article will examine the Communists in UAW politics from 1937 until the anti-Communist victory of Walter Reuther in 1947.

By 1937, the Communists had ceased to stand for a particular strategy in the labor movement.

A NOTE ON SOURCES

James R. Prickett, "Communists and Communist Issue in the American Labor Movement, 1920-1950," (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 1975), remains a major source. This dissertation can be ordered from University Microfilms for the exorbitant price of $20; order number is 76-3501. It is available in the UE library in New York City and the ILWU library in San Francisco, and several other libraries. A second, more easily available source is Roger Keeran, **The Communist Party and the Auto Workers Unions** (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980). Keeran's account of this period is more detailed than Prickett's. Keeran supports the popular front, so most readers will have considerable political differences with him, but the book is accurate, well-documented, and certainly worth reading. Wyndham Mortimer's autobiography **Organize: My Life as a Union Man** is available in paperback from Beacon Press, as well as many libraries.

For readers in the Detroit area, the Wayne State University Archives of Labor History and Urban Affairs has a number of collections which are extremely useful to anyone studying the role of the Communist Party in auto. The most useful were the Joe Brown collection, the Nat Ganley collection, and the Henry Kraus collection.

By R.O'M.

Refuting the Slanderers

Marx: Fighter Against Racism

As capitalism becomes more and more obviously vicious and decrepit, more and more people start to think that Karl Marx might have been on to something after all. In response, the newspapers, TV and pro-ruling class professors, who have always taught us that Marx was crazıy, are stepping up their attacks on him. A few years ago, the Public Broadcasting System aired a series by John Kenneth Galbraith, favorite economist of the Kennedys, whose line is that Marx was a nineteenth-century genius whose views had mostly become outmoded. Now they have replaced these slick attacks, tinged with faint praise, with a series by super-racist Ben Wattenberg, originator of the phrase "silent majority," and another by fascist Milton Friedman, economic advisor to fascist regime in Chile. To listen to these guys, you would think that Marx was as bad as Hitler.

One frequent charge made against Marx is that he was a racist. In this article, we will look at Marx's achievements as an anti-racist fighter, together with the limitations and defects in his attitudes toward race. We will discover, as one result, how incredibly far the anti-Marxist "experts" will go in falsifying history.

Marx developed his views on racism during his years of exile in London, after he had been expelled from Germany and France for his revolutionary activities. There is a specially clear statement of his ideas in a letter he wrote to friends of his who had gone to live in New York. In this letter, which appears as an appendix to this article, he says that anti-Irish racism instilled in English workers "is the secret by which the capitalist class [in Britain] maintains its power." This racism, he points out, divides up the

British workers, black and white, in rebellion against racism and unemployment, July 1981. As in Marx's time, fighting racism is the key to building a revolutionary movement

working class, and blinds ethnically English workers to their real enemy, the English bosses. He points out that it is basically the same with black and white workers in the United States.

It is especially important that **Marx saw racism as the main obstacle to socialism in England.** By 1870, when he wrote this letter, Marx believed that objective economic circumstances in England were advanced enough to be a basis for socialism. Trade union organization was the most advanced in the world. So nothing could be farther from the truth than the idea that Marx thought racism was unimportant compared with trade union issues, or that he thought capitalist economies would collapse in economic depressions or wars regardless of whether racism was fought. Yet this is the interpretation, not just of out-right anti-Marxists, but of revisionists (phony socialists) like Michael Harrington.

Marx's commitment to fighting racism and colonialism was not just verbal. He was willing to stake the future of the International Workingmen's Association, a left-wing unionists' organization he devoted years of his life to building, in a struggle to win support for Irish independence. He eventually succeeded in overcoming the objection that this was an extra issue that would split the movement (sound familiar?). The IWA helped organize a massive demonstration of London workers for an amnesty for Irish political prisoners in 1869.

Where anti-black racism is concerned, Marx's attitude is summed up in **Capital**: Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black skin it is branded." During the U.S. Civil War, Marx constantly publicized and strengthened British textile-workers' support for the anti-slavery cause, support that went against their narrow economic interest, since the blockade of the South cut off cotton supplies and led to massive lay-offs. He was almost alone among historians then in his appreciation of the crucial role of 200,000 ex-slave Union soldiers in the victory over the pro-slavery forces.

ON THE JEWISH QUESTION

When academics brand Marx a racist, they have to scramble for shreds to make their case sound good to those who haven't read these parts of Marx's writings. Often they claim that Marx wrote an anti-semitic essay, **On 'The Jewish Question.'** In fact, one reprint of this essay, edited by an anti-Marxist, was retitled by the editor as **A World Without Jews.** Marx himself was Jewish by origin. His upbringing was basically non-religious, and his father had made an official conversion to Christianity for career reasons. This does

not stop the experts, some of them Jewish nationalists who love to attack Jewish communists as "self-hating Jews."

The fact is Marx's essay is a book review in which he attacks an anti-semitic book, Bruno Bauer's **The Jewish Question.** Bauer argued that Jews should not be treated as equal citizens because they regarded themselves as a separate, chosen people. Marx shows that this is a terrible argument, and that it can be rejected even by someone who sees that mere legal political equality (one-person, one-vote, etc.) can go along with enormous oppression.

Marx's essay contains many sharp attacks on Judaism. Marx correctly saw that religion is a dead-end trap, which leads people to look at their problems as inevitable ("it's God's will") and to look for solutions in the hereafter, not now. When he wrote **On 'The Jewish Question'** in 1844, Marx was heavily influenced by Feuerbach, a German materialist philosopher who had just written an extremely sharp attack on Christianity called **The Essence of Christianity.** Marx saw himself as extending Feuerbach's book to include an attack on Judaism as well as Christianity. We fully endorse Marx's criticisms of religion, including Judaism. We reject the ridiculous claim of right-wingers that attacks on religions, such as Judaism, are the same as attacks on the people who believe in that religion.

In his essay, Marx saw Judaism as the religious ideology best suited for a money-making society and he therefore felt that the struggle against Judaism was an important part of the fight against money-grubbing. (Later, he was to see that the fight against capitalism and its ideology is much broader and more important than the fight against the Judaic religion). Unfortunately, there are a few paragraphs from his essay which, when lifted out of context, make it appear that Marx was opposed to rights for the Jews, when the essay makes clear that Marx was opposed to Judaism instead. The main section which is poorly worded is:

> What is the secular basis of Judaism? *Practical need, self-interest.*
>
> What is the worldly cult of the Jew? *Bargaining.* What is his worldly god? *Money.* Very well! Emancipation from *bargaining* and *money*, and thus from practical and real Judaism would be the self-emancipation of our era.
>
> An organization of society that would abolish the preconditions of bargaining and thus its possibility would render the Jew impossible. His religious consciousness would dissolve like a dull mist in the actual life-giving air of society. On the other hand, when the Jew recognizes this practical nature of his as futile and strives to eliminate it, he works away from his previous development toward general *human emancipation* and opposes the *supreme practical* expression of human self-alienation.
>
> Thus we perceive in Judaism a general and *contemporary anti-social* element, which has been carried to its present high point by a historical development in which the Jews have contributed to this element, a point at which it must necessarily dissolve itself.
>
> **The emancipation of the Jews, in the final analysis,** is the emancipation of mankind from Judaism.

COLONIALISM

Marx is often portrayed as a supporter of colonialism as a modernizing force. It is true that Marx believed that the British imperialists were creating the diggers of their own graves by uniting the previously-isolated villages of India through railway networks and the like. Yet far from portraying this as a painless, benevolent process, he wrote of colonialism in India as a vicious system of oppression, to be ended by socialist revolution.

> As the English bourgeoisie may be forced to do will neither emancipate nor materially mend the social condition of the mass of the people, depending not only on the development of the productive powers, but of their appropriation by the people. But what they will not fail to do is to lay down the material premises for both. Has the bourgeoisie ever done more? Has it ever effected a progress without dragging individuals and peoples through blood and dirt, through misery and degradation?
>
> The Indians will not reap the fruits of the new elements of society scattered among them by the British bourgeoisie, till in Great Britain itself the now ruling classes shall have been supplanted by the industrial proletariat, or till the Hindoos themselves shall have grown strong enough to throw off the English yoke altogether [. . .]
>
> When a great social revolution shall have mastered the results of the bourgeois epoch, the market of the world and the modern powers of production, and subjected them to the common control of the most advanced peoples, then only will human progress cease to resemble that hideous pagan idol, who would not drink the nectar but from the skulls of the slain.

These views on India are paralleled by Marx's views on China. He believed that the isolation of the traditional Chinese village must be broken down before Chinese socialism could be created. At the same time, he believed that the supposedly passive working people of China might be the first to make a successful socialist revolution.

> When our European reactionaries, on their next flight through Asia, will have finally reached the Chinese Wall, the gates

that lead to the seat of primeval reaction and conservation–who knows, perhaps they will read the following inscription on the Wall:

Republique Chinoise
Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite!
(Chinese Republic
Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!)

PERSONAL ATTITUDES

The case that Marx was a racist boils down to Marx's use of ethnic and racial stereotypes in passages scattered throughout his writings. Thus, in a letter to Engels, he will say of someone, "he was a good fellow but a bit dense, a typical Saxon" (a native of the German state of Saxony). That way of talking isn't so shocking, since no one has been killed or enslaved out of anti-Saxon prejudice. But elsewhere, when we find Marx using stereotypes of Jews as money-grubbers we know he has done something dangerously wrong.

In sum, Marx was an anti-racist fighter, largely, but not entirely, far ahead of his time.

In part, Marx is reflecting the language of the times. With dozens of ethnic styles of behavior, dress and speech still prominent, it was very natural in nineteenth century Europe to use ethnic stereotypes casually. But to let Marx's mistake go at that is to engage in the slavish Marx-worship that the Soviet revisionists love to encourage. In fact, as the pioneer of the study of racist ideology, Marx was not thoroughly indoctrinated in his own new anti-racist lessons. In the 1840's, when he first developed his ideas, he sometimes held the view that racial and national consciousness would simply die out as everyone became a part of a capitalist world economy. Though he came to see the importance of actively fighting racism, this lesson was not always a part of his language and attitudes. Also, his discussions of the modernizing role of colonialism sometimes reflect an exaggerated emphasis on technological change. Basically, class struggle and revolution was primary for Marx. But he was not always as clear on this point as he should have been.

Similarly, Marx's emphasis on the role of international relations, which was basically a scientific advance, sometimes led him to over-rate the importance of power-relations among different national and regional capitalist classes, as against the growth in unity of the international working class. Describing the impact of the international setting on class struggle was extremely important. Here, Marx points the way toward our account of US-Soviet rivalry as the context setting terms for working-class strategy today. But Marx was sometimes led to exaggerate the liberating effect of national independence movements. In his letter on Ireland, for example, he suggests that Irish independence would mean control of Ireland by small farmers and by farmworkers, which would in turn threaten the whole English ruling class. The possibility of capitalist oppression without English troops or cops, through the creation of a local Irish bourgeoisie, was not yet clear. On a very few other occasions, he opposed certain national independence struggles, (for example, among the Czechs in 1948) as contributing to the power of Tsarist Russia and holding back the formation of large, modern nation-states. The situation was complicated, especially since the leadership of many of these movements was bourgeois, even semi-feudal. What is primary is that Marx developed the basic ideas of working-class internationalism and socialist anti-imperialism when all the leading authorities proclaimed the civilizing mission of the imperial powers. What is secondary, but also true, is that Marx sometimes made mistakes, by retaining outmoded bourgeois thinking in terms in international power-plays.

DOES IT MATTER?

In sum, Marx was an anti-racist fighter, largely, but not entirely, far in advance of his time. Why is it important to achieve a balanced view of Marx on this and other issues? In part because attacks on Marx, like attacks on Stalin, are a typical way of creating cynicism, and of preparing people for war with the Soviet imperialists. In part because we have a tradition to defend. Serious people don't run the risks of revolution for an idea some clever person cooked up last week. We are mastering the task of understanding and changing society by building on a long tradition of study, thought and experiment–above all the great experiment of workers' struggles, including revolutions. We won't let the Marx "experts" with their lies take this tradition from us.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, **Ireland and the Irish Question**, Progress Publishers (Moscow, 1971). The letter to Meyer and Vogt, and other important material.

Karl Marx, **On Colonialism and Modernization**,

edited by S. Avineri, Doubleday, Garden City, L.I., 1968. Marx's articles on India, China, Mexico and North Africa. The article on China mentioned above is on pp. 44-5. The article on India from which excerpts were quoted is on pp. 125-131.

Karl Marx, **On America and the Civil War**, edited by S. Padover. McGraw-Hill, New York, 1974.

Marx's views on colonialism and international solidarity are discussed in Alan Gilbert, "Marx on Internationalism and War," which first appeared in *Philosophy and Public Affairs* (a magazine available in university libraries), Summer 1978, and is reprinted in Marshall Cohen (editor), **Marx, Justice and History**, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1980.

Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Soviet, edited by L. Easton and K. Guddat, Doubleday, 1967. The quote from "On 'The Jewish Question'" is from pp. 243-4. On Feuerbach, see **The Fiery Brook** selected writings of Ludwig Feuerbach, Doubleday, 1972.

APPENDIX

Letter from
MARX TO SIGFRID MEYER AND AUGUST VOGT IN NEW YORK

London, April 9, 1870

. . . The day after tomorrow (April 11) I shall send you whatever documents of the International I happen to have on hand. (It is too late to mail them today.) I shall likewise send some more of the Basle [reports].[a]

Among the material sent you will also find several copies of the resolutions of the General Council of November 30 on the *Irish amnesty*, resolutions which you already know and which were initiated by me; likewise an Irish pamphlet on the treatment of the Fenian convicts.

I had intended to submit further motions on the necessary transformation of the present Union 207 (i.e., enslavement of Ireland) into a free and equal federation with Great Britain. For the time being, further progress in this matter, as far as public resolutions go, has been suspended because of my enforced absence from the General Council. No other member of it has sufficient knowledge of Irish affairs and adequate prestige with the *English members* to be able to replace me in this respect.

However time has not been wasted and I ask you to pay particular attention to the following:

After studying the Irish question for many years I have come to the conclusion that the decisive blow against the English ruling classes (and it will be decisive for the workers' movement all over the world) cannot be delivered *in England* but *only in Ireland.*

On January 1, 1870,[b] the General Council issued a confidential circular[c] drawn up by me in French (for only the French journals; not the German ones produce important repercussions in England) on the relation of the Irish national struggle to the emancipation of the working class, and therefore on the attitude which the International Association should take towards the Irish question.

I shall give you here only quite briefly the salient points.

Ireland is the bulwark of the *English landed aristocracy.* The exploitation of that country is not only one of the main sources of their material wealth; it is their greatest *moral* strength. They, in fact, represent the *domination of England over Ireland.* Ireland is therefore the cardinal means by which the English aristocracy maintain *their domination in England* itself.

If, on the other hand, the English army and police were to be withdrawn from Ireland tomorrow, you would at once have an agrarian revolution in Ireland. But the downfall of the English aristocracy in Ireland implies and has as a necessary consequence its downfall in England. And this would provide the preliminary condition for the proletarian revolution in England. The destruction of the English landed aristocracy in Ireland is an infinitely easier operation than in England herself, because in Ireland *the land question* has been up to now the *exclusive* form of the social question because it is a question of existence, of *life* and *death*, for the immense majority of the Irish people, and because it is at the same time inseparable from the *national* question. Quite apart from the fact that the Irish character is more passionate and revolutionary than that of the English.

As for the English *bourgeoisie*, it has in the first place a common interest with the English aristocracy in turning Ireland into mere pasture land which provides the English market with meat and wool at the cheapest possible prices. It is likewise interested in reducing the Irish population by eviction and forcible emigration, to such a small number that *English capital* (capital invested in land leased for farming) can function there with "security." It has the same interest in *clearing the estates of Ireland* as it had in the clearing of the agricultural districts of England and Scotland. The £6,000-10,000 absentee-landlord and other Irish revenues which at present flow annually to London have also to be taken into account.

But the English bourgeoisie has also much more important interests in the present economy of Ireland. Owing to the constantly increasing concentration of leaseholds, Ireland constantly sends her own surplus to the English labour market, and thus forces down wages and lowers the material and moral position of the English working class.

And most important of all! Every industrial and commercial centre in England now possesses a working class divided into two *hostile* camps. English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker he regards himself as a member of the *ruling* nation and consequently he becomes a tool of the English aristocrats and capitalists *against Ireland*, thus strengthening their domination *over himself.* He cherishes religious, social, and national prejudices against the Irish worker. His attitude towards him is much the same as that of the "poor whites" to the Negroes in the former slave states of the U.S.A. The Irishman pays him back with interest in his own money. He sees in the English worker both the accomplice and the stupid tool of the *English rulers in Ireland.*

---

a The reference is to the reports of the Basle Congress of the First International published by the General Council.—Ed.

b Marx wrote: "December 1, 1869," apparently a slip of the pen.—Ed.

c Karl Marx, "Le Conseil Général au Conseil Fédéral de la Suisse Romande" ("The General Council to the Federal Council of Romance Switzerland").—Ed.

This antagonism is artificially kept alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short, by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes. *This antagonism* is the *secret of the impotence of the English working class,* despite its organisation. It is the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power. And the latter is quite aware of this.

But the evil does not stop here. It continues across the ocean. The antagonism between Englishmen and Irishmen is the hidden basis of the conflict between the United States and England. It makes any honest and serious co-operation between the working classes of the two countries impossible. It enables the governments of both countries, whenever they think fit, to break the edge off the social conflict by their mutual bullying, and, in case of need, by war between the two countries.

England, the metropolis of capital, the power which has up to now ruled the world market, is at present the most important country for the workers' revolution, and moreover the *only* country in which the material conditions for this revolution have reached a certain degree of maturity. It is consequently the most important object of the International Working Men's Association to hasten the social revolution in England. The sole means of hastening it is to make Ireland independent. Hence it is the task of the International everywhere to put the conflict between England and Ireland in the foreground, and everywhere to side openly with Ireland. It is the special task of the Central Council in London to make the English workers realise that *for them* the *national emancipation of Ireland* is not a question of abstract *justice or humanitarian sentiment* but *the first condition of their own social emancipation.*

These are roughly the main points of the circular letter, which thus at the same time give the *raisons d'être* of the resolutions passed by the Central Council on the Irish amnesty. A little later I sent a strongly-worded anonymous article[a] on the treatment of the *Fenians* by the English, etc., attacking Gladstone, etc., to the *Internationale* (organ of our Belgian Central Committeeb in Brussels). In this article I have also denounced the French Republicans (the *Marseillaise* had printed some nonsense on Ireland written here by the wretched Talandier) because in their national egoism they are saving all their wrath for the Empire.

That worked. My daughter Jenny wrote a series of articles to the *Marseillaise,* signing them J. Williams (she had called herself Jenny Williams in her private letter to the editorial board) and published, among other things, O'Donovan Rossa's letter. Hence immense noise.

After many years of cynical refusal *Gladstone was thereby* finally compelled to agree to a *parliamentary enquiry* into the treatment of the Fenian prisoners. Jenny is now the regular correspondent on Irish affairs for the *Marseillaise. (This is naturally to be a secret between us.)*

a. "Le gouvernement anglais et les prisonniers fénians" ("The English Government and the Fenian Prisoners") published on February 27, 1870.—Ed.

b Marx is referring to the Belgian Federal Council.—Ed.

For our party, as for Marx, the fight against racism has always occupied an important place in our practice and writing. The lies of the academic slanderers can't erase this fact.

By S.Y.

Was Slavery Necessary?

American Slavery, American Freedom
by Edmund S. Morgan

W.W. Norton & Co., New York, 1975. 454 pages. Available in $11.95 hardcover, $4.95 softcover

Karl Marx often classified other writers on political economy into two general categories: scientific economists and "vulgar economists." The latter term was reserved for those academicians who slavishly followed the dictates of the bourgeoisie, and took every opportunity to attack the working class. Then, as today, the vast majority of the world's "scholars" were little better than intellectual hired thugs for the ruling class. But occasionally honest scholars would stumble across genuine insights, and would write books or publish material which was of real importance to the working class. Though he was always disdainful of the base stupidity of the bourgeoisie and their intellectual lap dogs, Marx recognized the contribution of such "scientific" bourgeois thinkers as David Ricardo or Adam Smith.

And so it is today. Most of what passes for historical scholarship in the United States today is little better than bourgeois pap. But occasionally a study or two focusing on racism and the working class, on the capitalist class, or the origins of war, or some similar topic will emerge which holds genuine insight for revolutionaries and their friends. Several years ago InCAR reprinted Lerone Bennett's essay from **Ebony**, "The Road Not Taken," which is a concise history of the origins of racism in the U.S. Bennett's essay is perhaps the best example of a piece of "professional" historical scholarship that the working class has used. Edmund Morgan's **American Slavery, American Freedom** tells Bennett's story and a great deal more—he links the origins of racism in the United States to the development of "democratic" institutions in this country. [Morgan's book is a case of current "professional" history the working class **ought** to use.] delete?

The central theme of Morgan's book—which is about the establishment of colonial Virginia—is that racism and slavery were the **reasons** why the capitalists who founded the United States were able to use the rhetoric of "freedom" and "liberty" for **their** revolution. He points out that the most important figures in the American Revolution were all slaveholders, and that Southern plantation owners occupied the Presidency for 32 of the first 36 years of the Republic's history. Even more importantly, he documents the process by which racist ideas and practices were promoted by English capitalists, to purposely separate black and white workers. The biggest fear haunting the

Nat Turner led one of the major slave revolts in Colonial America. Colonial rulers feared only one thing more than slave rebellion – unity of black and white workers.

aspiring capitalist class in the "New World" in the Seventeenth century was a rebellion of black and white workers. Racism was their insurance that such a rebellion would never be able to gain force at that time. Slavery, and the tremendous profits it yielded, was the means by which the American "Revolution" was made possible.

Edmund Morgan is a history Professor at Yale University, and former President of the American Historical Association, a ruling class organization, but he has uncovered a series of very important insights about the origins of America's capitalist, racist, social system. What follows are three paragraphs from the book's concluding chapter. The first points out that racism in Seventeenth century America mirrored bourgeois attitudes about **all** working people, and made the ideology of "freedom" possible:

> Racism thus absorbed in Virginia the fear and contempt that men in England, whether Whig or Tory, monarchist or Republican, felt for the inarticulate lower classes. Racism made it possible for white Vireginians to develop a devotion to the equality that English republicans had declared to be the soul of liberty. There were too few free poor on hand to matter. And by lumping Indians, Mullattoes, and Negroes in a single pariah class, Virginians had paved the way for a similar lumping of small and large planters in a single master class. (p. 386)

Morgan then points out that racism made it possible—as it does today—for the ruling class in colonial America to foster the lie that there were no class antagonisms among white people. This myth was essential if the American "Revolution" was going to succeed.

> Virginians knew that the members of this class were not in fact equal, either in property or virtue, just as they knew that Negroes, Mulattoes and Indians were not one and the same. But forces which dictated that Virginians see Negroes, Mulattoes and Indians as one also dictated that they see large and small planters as one. Racism became an essential, if unacknowledged, ingredient of the Republican ideology that enabled Virginians to lead the nation. (p. 386)

And finally, Morgan argues that racism and slavery were essential to the development of Republican sentiments in the North as well as the South. The point is that it was the ruling classes' fear of working class rebellion that gave the new bourgeoisie the greatest pause while developing the new ideology of freedom and equality which became associated with the American Revolution. Without racism to divide the working class, and

slave labor to make the U.S. a profitable investment for European capital, the United States might never have come into being in the Eighteenth century. American freedom could not exist without slavery:

> How Virginian, then, was America? How heavily did American economic opportunity and political freedom rest on Virginia's slaves? If Virginia had continued to rely on the importation of white servants, would they have headed North when they turned free and brought insoluble problems of poverty with them? Would they have threatened the peace and prosperity of Philadelphia and New York and Boston, where the poor were steadily growing in numbers anyhow? **Would Northerners have embraced republican ideas of equality so readily if they had been surrounded by men in "a certain degree of misery"?** And could the new United States have made a go of it in the world of nations without the products of slave labor? Northern republicans apparently thought not. Some could not condone slavery and talked of breaking loose from the South in their own confederation. But the fact is that they did not. They allowed Virginians to compose the documents that founded their republic, and they chose Virginians to chart its course for a generation. (pp. 386-387) [Emphasis ours]

'Could the United States have made a go of it in the world of nations without the products of slave labor?'

Morgan, of course, does not take these issues to their revolutionary conclusions. He closes with a series of questions: "Was the vision of a nation of equals flawed at the source by contempt for both the poor and the black? Is America still colonial Virginia writ large?" But he fails to consider ways in which racism continues to work for the U.S. ruling class in the same way it did for their forefathers. Still, Morgan's book does more than anything yet published to definitively link racism with the ideological roots of capitalism in the United States.

Morgan's book makes ideal reading for courses in American history. And for students or teachers (say in high school) who cannot use such a book in their courses, it is an excellent book to read to wage struggle around the **real** story behind the "American Revolution," and the supposed equality of colonial America. The genocidal war of extermination waged by civilized Englishmen and Spaniards against the people who inhabited this land originally is a central theme in the book. And Morgan leaves no doubt as to who he thinks the villains are. With a characteristic flair for irony he points out the wide variety of racist stereotypes that English planters had reserved for Native Americans, the most vicious of which was "cannibals," in the context of discussing how "savage" the English themselves were—the only recorded instance of cannibalism in North America in the Seventeenth century was a case of an English settler eating his wife during one of Jamestown's lean winters.

Morgan describes the process by which English settlers became so engaged in raising tobacco that Jamestown colony nearly starved for over a decade, and was totally dependent upon the Natives for food and other necessary supplies. The chief attraction of tobacco, of course, was that it could be grown for a profit in Europe, and promised a fast return on investment in labor and money. And when the demands of the Colonists began to strain the resources of local Native societies, these noble Englishmen, fathers of our "fore-fathers," armed themselves and drove them off the land, plundering and stealing whatever they wanted. Morgan carefully documents who the real "barbarians" were in the settlement of America. After reading his book it isn't difficult to see how the same process is still happening in this country and elsewhere today. Things really haven't changed **that** much in the past three hundred years: capitalism is still **basically** the same!

Why would a person like Edmund Morgan write a book such as this? Unlike other bourgeois historians Morgan has a good sense of the material problems of society in the past. He understands that labor was key to the establishment of a European type society in North America, and that the most important issue facing the ruling class of early American society was class struggle. This point of departure alone has made his work distinctive. Because **American Slavery, American Freedom** specifically discusses the role of slavery and racism in this process, it is especially important. Edmund Morgan is more than just another "vulgar" bourgeois historian. While not explicitly a Marxist, and certainly not a revolutionary, he has produced a body of research and a story about the roots of American society which confirms our theory and practice today. Friends and advocates of the working class every where ought to put it to good use!

By M.R.L.

On Religion and Revolution

Revolution in Judaea: Jesus and the Jewish Resistance
by Hyam Maccoby

Taplinger Publishing Co., New York, 1980. 256 pages. Hardcover only, $9.95

When fascism is on the rise, religion gains new adherents and publicity. The big capitalists who need fascism for profits and power also need religion. They promote it for the masses because religion distracts workers from fighting to overthrow the bosses in this, the earthly world. As Marx and Engels pointed out, religion sometimes motivates struggles for justice. But the religious establishment tries to keep these struggles in bounds. Religious leaders always call for non-violence (or for pro-boss violence) and for tactics which do not threaten the capitalists' rule.

As U.S. bosses and politicians rush to fascism, we are reaching more workers who are motivated, but also blinded, by Christianity, Islam, and so on. Their religion is one reason why they hate racism and are open to InCAR's ideas, but they need to join PL! We need to win them to the struggle for socialism and to see that a necessarily violent revolution is the only way to get where religion claims to be going – to brother/sisterhood, peace, justice and so on. The way to open their eyes is to become close friends and **motivate them politically to join in concrete, militant fights** against racism and the bosses. Only experience changes attitudes. Mere talk changes nothing.

But making political points during struggle is important. To make points about Christianity, we can use facts from a book by Hyam Maccoby, called ***Revolution in Judaea: Jesus and the Jewish Resistance,*** (New York: Taplinger Publishing Co., 1979). Maccoby argues that the established Christian version of Jesus is a fraud, and that the actual historical Jesus was a militant leader of a political movement to free the Jews from Roman rule.

When Jesus was a boy, Roman armies took over the Jewish homeland. As he grew up, Jewish militants constantly fought to win back Judean independence. Many of these militants believed that their god would aid their cause. However, **they also used violence to build a political revolution.** Maccoby thinks, on the basis of much historical evidence, that the historical Jesus was a leader of an anti-upper class, anti-Roman, religious revolutionary movement. So do a number of other present-day scholars of the New Testament, many of them religious and none of them revolutionaries.

All these scholars use the same kind of arguments, based on a very close analysis of the text of the New Testament documents, put in the context of what is known about the history of Palestine in the first century. A student of Jewish history and traditions, head of the major Jewish research ionstitute in England, the Leo Baeck Institute, Maccoby is a Zionist who projects post-war militaristic, racist Zionist nationalism onto the history of the first century. This

is the book's great weakness, and it overshadows the valuable points Maccoby and others like him have to contribute to an accuirate, materialist understanding of the origins of Christianity. The other major scholar to argue that Jesus was a revolutionary, S.G.F. Brandon, was also motivated by a strong admiration for the founders of Israel, as well as by a guilt over the shameful centuries of anti-semitic racism fomented by Christians against Jews – a guilt which Zionists have used to persuade Christians to support Israel's racist policies. Brandon, an ordained minister of the Church of England, was a professor of comparative religion at Manchester University.

The idea that the earliest Christians were militant revolutionaries is far from new. In fact, the very earliest attempt by a Christian scholar to study the New Testament critically – the 18th century "Fragments" of Reimarus, a German scholar who never dared to publish his work in his lifetime – take the viewpoint that Jesus was a revolutionary of some kind. The evidence that Jesus and the earliest of his followers were closely related to Jewish anti-Roman, anti-Jewish upper class insurgents is, in fact, very strong. Some of its elements are:

*The Roman crucifixion and the inscription over the cross ("King of the Jews"). Only rebels and slaves were executed in this painful way. The accusations, put by New Testament writers into the mouths of the Jewish priests, make it clear that political rebellion was the charge against the historical Jesus, as does the inscription.

*Simon the Zealot, the apostle. The Zealots were a party of religious revolutionaries. The author of the Gospel of Mark apparently believed that Simon was a member of this party (instead of being just "zealous") and strove to hide this from his audience. Several other apostles have apparently warlike nicknames. Thus it would appear that rebels were among Jesus' disciples.

*The entry into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday) and the Cleansing of the Temple. The first is performed in such a way as to guarantee that the Jerusalem masses – and the Jewish high priests and Roman authorities – would assume that Jesus was setting himself up as the "Messiah," the "anointed of God" to liberate Palestine from the Romans. ("Jesus the Christ" is Greek for "Joshua the Messiah." Joshua was the most successful general of the Old Testament Jews.) If any historical event lies behind the cleansing of the Temple, it must have been a mass riot, not the act of an individual, and such a riot against the symbol of upper-class authority would have been set down as seditious.

*Most quotations from Jesus attested by the earliest three Gospels show that Jesus' movement was directed to the poor, was unfriendly-to-hostile to the rich, and was opposed both to the Romans (as seen in the Parable of the Gadarene Swine and the Tribute Money) and to the Jewish High Priesthood. The Book of Acts asserts that the early Christian Church in Jerusalem was "communist" and that this resulted in the alienation of some middle-class and wealthier members. It was undoubtedly intended to do so.

*What little is known of the Jerusalem Church after the Book of Acts shows that its leaders and members must have taken an active part in the rebellion against Rome of 67-73 AD, as a consequence of which Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed. This is not compatible with the theory of a pacifist, non-political Jesus.

There is much other evidence as well; these are just some of the more important points. However, Maccoby's book ignores certain points (as do Brandon's works) which make it difficult or impossible to conclude that the historical figure whose career lies behind the stories in the New Testament – the historical Jesus – was primarily a political revolutionary. A few arguments are obvious. For example, many of the sayings attributed to Jesus are mainly moral, not political, in content. But perhaps the most important argument is the fact that from the earliest days of Christianity, within a few years of Jesus' death, a religion had grown up around him which was entirely pacifist, other-worldly, directed mainly to non-Jews, and among them, mainly to the more well-off – the religion of St. Paul. It is easier to reconcile this kind of Christianity with the the facts cited above by assuming that early Christianity was an apocalyptic movement among the oppressed, one which included Zealots and rebels and even did not rule out force, but which relied basically on divine intervention to deliver the Jews from oppression. Despite his claims throughout the book, Maccoby – more interested in Jewish revolt than in Christian religion – ultimately admits that this view of Jesus as an "apocalyptic" rather than a revolutionary is the most probable.

Thirty years after Jesus' arrest and execution, the Jews mounted a full scale war against Rome. They lost the war completely. With the Roman victory, some of Jesus' following became frightened. Many of the Jewish-Christians had fought in the war and were killed. The surviving leaders sold out. Anxious to avoid association with the Jewish political revolutionists, they painted their movement, and Jesus, as pacifist and non-political. This was fairly easy to do, since it had contained these tendencies from the beginning. That is how we get the New Testament, with its picture of Jesus as a peaceful, divine savior who was killed by the Jews.

Maccoby correctly points out the anti-semitism of the New Testament, but he does not call

it what it is: racism against Jews. He does show that Christian leaders who wrote the New Testament swallowed and spread vicious, anti-semitic propaganda put out by the conquering Romans. In their cover-up, they make Jesus seem like a victim of the Jewish establishment and the Jewish people. In the Gospels, the Jewish people supposedly demanded that the Roman commander, Pilate, kill Jesus. Maccoby's point is that in fact, Jesus was opposed to the **Roman** state, and that is was the Romans who killed him. Today, anti-semitism is growing again around the world as part of the bosses' drive to fascism. Today's bosses who push this racist garbage have allies in the dead Roman bosses who helped push it into the New Testament.

Maccoby's book is especially useful in showing that the idea that Jesus was divine is a lie. For those workers who do not accept that there is no god, we can use Maccoby to point out that Jesus himself never thought of himself as anything but an ordinary man. Terms like "Christ" and "Messiah" were not religious titles in Jesus' time: they referred to secular kings and leaders. Terms like "Son of God" certainly carried a religious meaning, but only in the sense of "believer in and follower of God." Maccoby's work indicates that Jesus saw himself as the future leader of a liberated earthly Jewish kingdom. Unfortunately, he also believed that "God" would somehow intervene to bring it about. He paid for this mistake with his life – a lesson workers today can learn from. Only the armed strength and unity of the working class can lead to socialist revolution. Belief in gods cannot.

Finally, Maccoby shows how Paul and other early Christian leaders turned Jesus into a divine savior. They were influenced by "pagan" religions, including Rome's, which featured beings who were half-god and half-human. They saw life as a sinful place from which we need to be "saved." None of them knew Jesus, who had not had such ideas. They wrote the New Testament late in the first century, long after Jesus' death. Scholars have known these facts for centuries, but few Christians do. The bosses have taken care over the last two thousand years to hide the truth.

Despite Maccoby's strengths in revealing some of these lies, his book is not free of distortions reflecting his own biases. Maccoby's Zionism leads to a depiction of Jesus as something like an early and unusually pious member of the Irgun Zvai Leumi (Menachim Begin's gang of racist terrorists in the 1940s). Despite these misleading aspects, Maccoby's book is useful for a close analysis of some passages in the Bible, particularly the New Testament. In those sections, Maccoby basically lifts his arguments from other scholars, whose works are out of print. These are the useful parts of the book, and should whet the interest of any reader who might want to go further. For this reason, we have included a short note at the end of the review, with suggestions for further reading.

All of these new arguments and understandings about early Christianity should be viewed as one more bullet in an arsenal of ideological weapons we need to level on the bosses' tools of pacifism and religious blindness. The struggle against religion is one we cannot and should not, avoid. Many of our friends will come around or join InCAR or even PL because their religion tells them the world is not what it should be. But they will never "change the world" without revolution.

FOR FURTHER READING

An excellent introduction to this subject is ***Marx and Engels on Religion.*** Karl Kautsky's ***Foundations of Christianity***(New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972).

Also especially recommended are the works by Archibald Robertson, especially ***The Origins of Christianity*** (New York: International Publishers, 1966). Robertson's facts are sometimes a little out of date – this book was basically written in the 1930s – and Maccoby and the rest can be a useful supplement. Robertson's work stresses class struggle and analysis along the lines of historical materialism. Robertson is sympathetic to the **possibility** that the historical Jesus might have been involved in Jewish anti-Roman anti-upper class revolutionary activity, but does not state this definitively. He also wrote an earlier work,***The Bible and its Background*** (London: Watts,1945) which is popular, useful, and available in some larger libraries. Robertson also wrote a good Marxist introduction to the Reformation of the sixteenth century in Europe, which gave rise to Protestantism – ***The Reformation*** (London: Watts, 1960) and several other works attacking the Church of England in a popular way. Another useful work of his is ***The French Revolution*** (London: Watts, 1949), which deals with the role of religion in that revolution.

The best-known advocate of the theory that Jesus himself was an anti-Roman, lower-class revolutionary is S.G.F. Brandon, whose book ***The Trial of Jesus of Nazareth*** (New York: Stein & Day, 1971) is still available in paperback. It is very scholarly and rather heavy reading, but it has all the references. Both Maccoby and Robertson write in a much more accessible, easier-to-read style.

All of these works agree that the early Christian movement was a Jewish, anti-Roman and anti-upper class movement, oriented to this world and not the next, and that Jesus himself was, at least, no pacifist. They are also useful to read in order to see the contradictions, lies, cover-ups, etc. in the New Testament.

By L.D.

A New Look At the AFL-CIA

Yankee Trade Unions Go Home
by Jack Scott

Published by New Star Books, Vancouver, B.C., Canada. Other details not available.

Jack Scott, an expelled Canadian CP'er, traces American history and unionism with an eye that will challenge most Reds in the U.S. He opens with an attack on Lenin's "Letter to American Workers," a rave on the 1776 revolution led by smugglers and slave owners, by calling Lenin's work unfounded, opportunistic claptrap. Scott rightly figures that this was a revolution with class content like all the rest. The class that won, the Founding Fathers, created a self-serving mythology about freedom, liberty, and manifest destiny which poisoned the well for American workers. But Scott wrongly argues that the American working class has been eagerly lining up at the well for their own dram of purple Kool-Aid ever since.

Early on, says Scott, US workers identified their interests as being equivalent to the interests of their local bosses. It's been business unionism, craft unionism, and downhill for a century. The AFL was founded by hacks who opposed industrial unionism; people who were only concerned about protecting the privileges of skilled workers, often at the expense of their unskilled co-workers. Scott leans heavily on this and similar facts and usually fails to point out that this ultimately has the effect of driving down every one's standard of life.

Samuel Gompers, and others involved in forming the AFL, did so in part because they wanted to destroy the idea of unions taking part in political action. In practice, this meant wrecking the Knights of Labor in the late 1800's. With the help of some "enlightened" employers, they did this with a vengeance. And they led the organized sector of the American working class in to the trap Marx warned of—carrying on a guerrilla war, or the appearance of it, against the effects of the existing system without ever saying "Abolish the wage system."

Having identified themselves with the capitalist system, the union leaders had little trouble wrapping themselves up in racism, imperialism and sexism too. After adopting racist membership rules (which Scott fails to note were also harshly sexist) the craft unions strenuously maneuvered to bar minority workers from training and apprenticeship. As usual they found cooperative partners in their employers and universities. Concurrently, the skilled tradesmen of the AFL fought the organization of workers on an industrial basis because they feared that activity might cut into the bosses'—and therefore their—profits.

The CIO differed with the AFL in the **form** of organizing, industrial as opposed to craft, but

George Meany and Walter Reuther unite the AFL and CIO, 1954. By then, the differences between the two labor federations were purely cosmetic – neither represented class struggle.

agreed with the AFL in buying into the existing social order. While there was a left among the founders of the CIO; it was ultimately wrecked by the CP's class collaborationist policies during WW II. Their future brothers and sisters in the AFL were busy extolling the virtues of Italian fascism in the thirties, mostly as an alternative to the example of the Soviet Union.

The AFL was never bothered by imperialism. They supported **both** US invasions of Cuba, an early one that worked and one that didn't. War, you see, had the pleasant effect of draining off excess workers and injecting a little prosperity into the economy. The AFL supported invasions in the Philippines, and imperialist efforts all over Latin America. And after they lent their support, they demanded the right to organize the defeated workers—into craft unions.

Particularly during and after WW II, the AFL adopted a policy of virulent anti-communism. Abroad the AFL developed a lasting relationship with the US military and CIA. Scott's book is quite helpful in describing the details of this occurrence—from the destabilization of Chile to the wrecking of European trade unions, and their replacement with AFL counterparts, because European workers were making nasty fights like refusing to load French ships bound for Viet Nam. The AFL, to bring things up to date, now sends its young intelligence prospects to Sweden, often under the auspices of Michael Harrington's Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC) an anti-communist "socialist" organization. They are supposed to view "real worker control" and pick up on the spy game. The AFL kept their weary eye out for pinkos at home too—they ran reds out of the unions and became an agency for enforcing the bosses' rules.

Scott's book suffers from several weaknesses. He uncritically eulogizes bourgeois nationalists like Jose Marti. He believes that because American trade union leaders linked their own interests to imperialism, this developed into the **material** interest of all American workers. And, driving from this error he tends to blame all US workers for the sorry results . . . Scott misses, too, the question of whether the current state of American unions is not the logical result of trade unionism itself, that is whether or not, without leadership from a revolutionary party, or even with it, trade unionism is enough to meet the needs of working people. Despite these problems, this book should be read by every serious trade unionist and should be introduced as a text into steward training and labor history classes. Taken with **Labor's Untold Story** Foner's **History of the US Labor Movement**, **Yankee Unions Go Home** will lend a balance that won't be found anywhere else.

PLP Publications

IN THIS ISSUE!

(25¢ – No. 17 on coupon)

CHALLENGE-DESAFIO
Weekly newspaper in English and Spanish, with monthly French and Arabic editions, reporting and analyzing struggles from the shops, campuses and communities and from around the world. . . . . **1 year – $7.50**
Le DEFI (French) . . . . . **1 year – $2.00**
AL TAHADDI (Arabic) . . . . . **1 year – $2.00**

PL - PROGRESSIVE LABOR MAGAZINE
Quarterly magazine of class struggle and political analysis, including all major PL statements. . **1 year – $3.50**
Current English issue – 75c . . . No. 18 on coupon
Current Spanish issue – 75c . . No. 19 on coupon

POSTERS
We Go Marching On (Harpers Ferry) $1.00
Is Your Bathroom Breeding Bolsheviks? . . $2.00
From the Depths $1.00

RECORDS OF REVOLUTIONARY SONGS
A WORLD TO WIN $2.00
THE PLP-LP (Specify 8-track or LP) **$2.00**

1. **ROAD TO REVOLUTION III . . . . . 50¢**
The general line of the Progressive Labor Party and the fight against revisionism.
Order English [1a] or Spanish [1b]

2. **BASICS OF MARXISM-LENINISM . . . . . 50¢**
An introduction to the principles of Marxism and the ideas PLP stands for. Bilingual pamphlet.

3. **RACISM, INTELLIGENCE AND THE WORKING CLASS . . . . . 25¢**
An incisive critique of IQ theories and the racists behind them – how they help build racism and fascism.

4. **SMASH RACISM WITH REVOLUTION . . . 10¢**
How the rulers make super-profits from racism, and why only socialist revolution can stop them.
Order English [4a] or Spanish [4b].

5. **SMASH SEXISM WITH SOCIALISM . . . . 25¢**
How garment and other bosses use sexism against all workers. Men and women must unite to smash it.
Order English [5a] or Spanish [5b].

6. **30 FOR 40 . . . . . 10¢**
The historic struggle for the shorter workday. Why we need it, and how we can win it.

7. **STUDENTS! TO ARMS AND REVOLUTION!. 15¢**
The role of universities under capitalism. Why students must join workers to make a revolution.

8. **SIT DOWN! The Flint Strike of 1936-37 . . . 40¢**
How auto workers occupied GM plants for 44 days, winning industrial unionism in the CIO.

9. **SOLDIERS, SAILORS AND THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM . . . . . 10¢**
Workers, both civilian and military, must unite to fight for socialist revolution, under the leadership of PLP.

10. **IRAN: THE NEED FOR SOCIALISM . . . . 50¢**
How capitalism developed in Iran, and why Iranian workers need to fight for socialist revolution.

11. **WIN WITH MARXISM-LENINISM . . . . . 25¢**
A PLP cartoon book, in English and Spanish, featuring many favorites that have appeared in ***Challenge*** and ***PL Magazine***

12. **REVERSAL OF SOCIALISM IN CHINA . . . 25¢**
PLP analysis of events in China after the Cultural Revolution. How counter-revolution won out.

13. **THUNDER IN THE MINES . . . . . 10¢**
Analysis of the Miller regime in the UMW. Still valid today, it shows how UMW hacks and the mine-owners work to build fascism.

14. **END SLAVE LABOR WELFARE . . . . . 25¢**
How the ruling class uses welfare clients as slave labor. We need worker-client unity to make socialist revolution.

15. **PITTSBURGH REBELLION OF 1877 . . . . 25¢**
The story of the great railworkers' strike and how it spread through the working class of Pennsylvania.

16. **PHILADELPHIA TEACHERS' STRIKE . . . 10¢**
Lessons of the 1973 Philadelphia school strike, and the fight for 30 for 40.

Mail Orders To
PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY
GPO Box 808
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11202

Make all checks payable to PLP or Progressive Labor
Please include 50c postage

PLEASE SEND THE LITERATURE MARKED BELOW:

___**CHALLENGE-DESAFIO** . . . . . **(1 year – $7.50)**
___**Le DEFI (1 yr – $2)** . ___**AL TAHADDI (1 yr – $2)**
___**PL - PROGRESSIVE LABOR** . . **(1 year – $3.50)**

POSTERS: ___Harpers ___Bolsheviks ___Depths
RECORDS: ___World to Win ___PLP-LP ___Tape
PAMPHLETS: (Indicate quantity of each you want)

___1a ___1b ___2 ___3 ___4a ___4b ___5a
___6 ___7 ___8 ___9 ___10 ___11 ___12
___13 ___14 ___15 ___16 ___17 ___18 ___19

NAME:_____

ADDRESS:_____

CITY, STATE, ZIP:_____

AMOUNT ENCLOSED:_____

COMING ISSUES

Fall 1981

GIs and Revolution: A History of Communist Military Work, From the Bolsheviks to Today

Thread City, U.S.A.: A History of Struggle

War and Revolution in Central America

The Collapse of the Fake Left

Strategy for Revolution in the 'Third World'

...and later

Genetics and Capitalism

Nuclear War: End of the World, or the Eve of Revolution

Los Angeles Garment Work

Communism and Religion

Rebuilding the International Communist Movement

Subscribe to PL★

Use the subscription coupon on the facing page

Garment Workers Unite
SMASH SEXISM!
With Socialist Revolution!
Progressive Labor Party Pamphlet 25¢
Win With Marxism-Leninism
Racism-Super-Profits
Students: To Arms and Workers' Revolution
Progressive Labor Party 15¢
SOLDIERS & SAILORS and the Fight for Socialism 10¢

Read PL Pamphlets and Publications